CHIPPEWA CREE TRIBE WETLAND PROGRAM PLAN

FY: 2018-2020

WATER IS SACRED

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THE CHIPPEWA CREE TRIBE WETLANDS PROGRAM MISSION:

FURTHER DEVELOP THE TRIBAL WETLAND PROGRAM TO FULFILL THE TRIBES' DESIRE OF NO NET LOSS OF WETLANDS OR WETLAND FUNCTIONS AND VALUES.

Contact Information for the Chippewa Cree Tribe's Wetland Program

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INTRODUCTION

The Chippewa Cree Tribe scaled back the activities within this Wetlands Program Plan from the previous 4-year timeframe to a 3-year time frame. The Chippewa Cree Tribe felt that a 3-year timeframe is more realistic and it will reflect funding cycles.

The 2018-2020 Wetlands Program Plan addresses expanding the Sweetgrass Monitoring/Assessment and transplanting activities, to include inventorying and assessment of head water springs and fens sites that could serve as transplanting/restoration sites. Will also include demonstration voluntary restoration efforts at select transplant sweetgrass sites.

The Chippewa Cree Tribe recognizes that the EPA has identified four core elements that the Tribe may consider while developing a comprehensive wetland program plan. The Chippewa Cree Tribe will address two of the four core elements in this Wetland Program Plan. Chippewa Cree Tribe will address core elements 1 and 3. (http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/wetlands/cefintro.cfm#what)

1. **Monitoring and Assessment**
2. **Regulatory activities (including 401 certifications)**
3. **Voluntary restoration and protection**
4. **Water quality standards for wetlands**

The Chippewa Cree Tribe has consistently proven programmatic capability in performing and successfully completing wetlands project plans during each of the last five funding cycles. The Tribal Wetlands program has successfully completed work plan components and submitted technical reports documenting each project throughout.

FY2010/2011 Box Elder, Beaver and Upper-Big Sandy Creek- Develop and test sweetgrass monitoring protocol for 10 sweetgrass/wetlands sites, review and revise water quality/wetlands standards (Triennial Review), work with the CSS on developing a sweetgrass curriculum for voluntary usage in our school system and propose several sweetgrass/wetlands sites for inclusion into the Tribal Registry under the CRPO for additional protection.

FY2011/2012 Chippewa Cree Tribe Sweetgrass Wetlands Monitoring, Assessment and Protection Project- Develop site-specific restoration plans for sweetgrass restoration areas located in and around wetlands, partner with the Tribal Infrastructure Committee (TIC) in the development of a Unified Tribal Development Code (UTDC) including a Setback Ordinance for building and infrastructure development, participate in the newly formed TIC to educate decision-makers on the current regulatory processes protecting wetlands and to promote the active and informed management of wetlands as a means to provide the highest level of protection, and develop a Wetlands Antidegradation Policy with an emphasis on Outstanding Tribal Resource Waters (OTRW).

FY12 & FY 13 Continued Chippewa Cree Tribe Sweetgrass Wetlands Monitoring, Assessment and Protection Project-Box Elder Creek, Beaver Creek and Big Sandy Creek Drainages- For FY12 and FY13, the Chippewa Cree Tribe utilized Wetlands Program Development Grant funding to continue Wetlands/Sweetgrass monitoring in the Box Elder, Beaver and Big Sandy Creek drainages, work with the newly created Office of Attorney General on compiling and revising the Wetlands Aquatic Lands Protection Ordinance (WALPO) and the newly created Wetlands Mitigation Policy into a single Tribal Wetlands Protection Policy document that will ensure wetlands are protected on the Reservation; and finally-the106, GAP and Wetlands Coordinators worked with the Stone Child College (local community college) on public educational course on 'Wetlands and Environmental Issues on the Reservation'.

FY14 & FY15 Chippewa Cree Tribe WPDG Application The Chippewa Cree Tribe, by and through the Tribal Water Resources Department, will utilize FY14 and FY15 Wetland Program Development Grant Funding to accomplish the following: 1) Conduct a Triennial Review of the current Tribal Water Quality and Wetlands Standards that were passed by Resolution 98-08; 2) Revise the current Wetlands Program Plan (which expires in FY14) for an additional three (3) years (FY15, FY16 and FY17) which will prioritize monitoring and assessment, Tribal Policy making pertinent to wetlands protection and restoration feasibility of future wetlands restoration projects on the Reservation; 3) Continue sweetgrass/wetlands monitoring in the Box Elder Creek Drainage and restore at least one (1) sweetgrass site within the conclusion of the project period; and 4) Develop an internal 401 Certification Protocol to be utilized for assisting Reservation decision makers on any future 404 Permit Applications on the Reservation. The Tribal Water Resources Department will utilize the following partners in accomplishing this endeavor: NRCS Liaison (Chester, Havre and Rocky Boy Field Office), NRCS Bridger Plant Materials Center (Bridger, Montana) and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (Billings, Montana Office).

FY15 & FY16 Wetland Program Development Grant The Chippewa Cree will utilize its FY 15 & 16 funding to accomplish the following: 1) Conduct a Triennial Review of the current Tribal Water Quality and Wetlands Standards that were passed by Resolution 98-08; 2) Revise the current Wetlands Program Plan (which expires in FY14) for an additional three (3) years (FY15, FY16 and FY17) which will prioritize monitoring and assessment, Tribal Policy making pertinent to wetlands protection and restoration feasibility of future wetlands restoration projects on the Reservation; 3) Continue sweetgrass/wetlands monitoring in the Box Elder Creek Drainage and restore at least one (1) sweetgrass site within the conclusion of the project period; and 4) Develop an internal 401 Certification Protocol to be utilized for assisting Reservation decision makers on any future 404 Permit Applications on the Reservation.

Overall Goal Statement and Timeframe for Plan:

The overall goal of the Chippewa Cree Tribal Wetlands Program Plan for 2018-2020 is described as follows:
"Further develop the Tribal Wetland Program to fulfill the tribes' desire of no net loss of wetlands or wetlands functions and values."

The Tribal Wetlands Program intends to fulfill the overall goal of no net loss by carrying out the following activities based on a three-year time frame.

Protect Tribal Wetlands Identified Specifically as Traditional Cultural Places

Identify Unique and High-Quality Wetlands

Improve the Wetlands Knowledge Base

Complete Baseline Wetland Inventory

Establish Protocol to Track Losses and Gained Wetlands

Establish Wetland Monitoring Program

Secure Additional Funding Sources for Voluntary Restoration

Utilize Tribal Functional Assessment Methodology

Identify Functions and Values Feasible with Mitigation

This WPP does not specifically include protection activities to Traditional Cultural Places (i.e. sweetgrass harvesting areas, culturally sensitive waters) but is an overall ongoing activity within the Chippewa Cree Tribal Wetlands Program.

Action and Activities Supporting Overall Goals, with Schedule:

Year One (2018)

Action:

During the 2016 field monitoring season, the Tribal Wetlands Coordinator and the Consultant, Tara Luna out planted locally collected and grown sweetgrass to the Belcourt and Eagleman sites. These two transplant sites will be monitored over the next 5 years to determine survival rates of the introduced plants.

During fiscal year 2018, the Chippewa Cree Tribe Wetlands Program will complete the following action's that includes two of the EPA's Four Core Elements for continued Wetlands Program progress: 1) **Monitoring and Assessment:** continued monitoring of sweetgrass wetlands to obtain data on population trends and 2) **Voluntary Restoration and Protection:** restoration of three existing sweetgrass wetlands (Watson, Belcourt and Eagleman Spring) and one historical sweetgrass site (Upper Muddy Creek). Core elements of a comprehensive wetlands program addressed by each activity are listed in parenthesis. Most of the activities listed here is field work. "Field season" is roughly from April to September (give or take a month). Non-field season activities will include but not limited to: reporting, revising of plans, public education activities.

Activities:

- Review and revise (if needed) the Wetlands Quality Assurance Project Plan. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment).** ***Dec-Feb 2018***
- Continue sweetgrass monitoring at sweetgrass producing wetlands. Data will be used to assess population trends and guide future restoration and reintroduction efforts at other historical or suitable wetland sites on Chippewa-Cree lands. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment).** ***Jul-Aug 2018***
- Conduct sweetgrass wetland condition and population monitoring in the Beaver Creek and Box Elder Creek Watersheds. Monitoring results will identify suitable headwater and fen wetland sites for future transplanting/reintroduction and identify any new sweetgrass populations in the watersheds. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment).** ***Jul-Aug 2018***
- Reintroduce local sweetgrass genets to amend declining populations, using local donor plants, at identified sweetgrass restoration wetland sites and augment small remnant populations at Belcourt, Eagleman Spring, and Watson sites. Suitable microsites, out-planting dates and plant stock types for augmenting declining and remnant populations have been identified for all restoration sties during past project work. **(Core Element 3. Voluntary Restoration and Protection).** ***Mar-May 2018***

Year Two (2019):

Action:

For FY 2019, Chippewa Cree Wetlands Program in collaboration with 106 Water Quality Program, will monitor wetland condition and acquire base line water quality data at fens and headwater spring fed wetlands in the Box Elder and Beaver Creek Drainages. Data will be used to assess for restoration needs, further development of Tribal Wetland Narrative and Numeric criteria within the Tribal Water Quality Standards, as well as evaluate, protect or improve existing water quality. Data will also serve to evaluate sites as potential sweetgrass planting sites. will have updated its Wetlands Program Plan and Wetlands Water Quality monitoring QAPP, submitting to the U.S. EPA for comment and approval. This ensures adherence to EPA requirements**.**

Activities:

- Continue yearly sweetgrass wetland condition and population monitoring in the Box Elder and Beaver Creek Watersheds. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment).** ***Summer 2019***

- Monitor augmented sweetgrass populations at 2017 restoration sites: Watson, Belcourt, Eagleman and Upper Muddy Creek. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment** & **Core Element 3. Voluntary Restoration and Protection).** ***Summer 2019***

- Will evaluate previous maps, monitoring reports and associated data to prepare for field work and collect, analyze and compare data with previous data sets to plot wetland condition changes, determine restoration or management needs and evaluate sites as potential sweetgrass transplantation sites. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment & Core Element 3. Voluntary Restoration and Protection).** ***Winter/Spring 2018 & 2019***

- Will submit an annual monitoring report each year to the U.S. EPA complete with data analysis. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment)**

Year Three (2020):

Action:

For FY 2020, the Chippewa Cree Tribe Wetlands Program will continue to monitor and assess the Sweetgrass reintroduction sites. The Chippewa Cree Wetlands Program will update, if necessary the Wetlands Program Quality Assurance Project Plan. Each of the transplanted/restoration sites will be monitored yearly for 3 years to determine outplanting survival, establishment and increase in sweetgrass populations that have been restored to historical sites and existing sites. The Chippewa Cree Tribe will also continue wetland condition monitoring at existing, historical and potential sweetgrass wetlands and incorporate 319 & 106 water quality monitoring into existing protocol. Additional restoration work will occur at historical sites and other groundwater fed wetlands determined suitable for long term persistence of transplanted sweetgrass populations. Wetland Program work will result in the development of Best Management Practices to protect and restore wetland condition and water quality and buffer and protect local sweetgrass populations from drastic environmental changes. "Field season" is roughly from April to September (give or take a month). Non-field season activities will include but not limited to: reporting, revising of plans, public education activities.

Activities:

- Continue sweetgrass wetland condition and population monitoring in the Box Elder and Beaver Watersheds. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment).** ***Summer 2020***

- Monitor augmented sweetgrass populations at 2017/2018 reintroduction sites: Watson, Belcourt, Eagleman. **(Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment).** ***Summer 2020***

- Continue monitoring at selected headwater and fen sites. (**Core Element 1. Monitoring and Assessment).** ***Summer 2020***

- Continue local community participation and education in perpetuating existing and restored sweetgrass populations and provide educational field work during wetland restoration projects. **Core Elements 1 and 3. Monitoring and Assessment, Voluntary Restoration and Protection).** ***Spring/Summer 2018***

- Develop and enhance wetland water quality monitoring protocol for cultural wetlands containing sweetgrass in conjunction with the 319 & 106 programs. **(Core Elements 1 and 3. Monitoring and Assessment, Voluntary Restoration and Protection).** ***Spring/Summer 2020***

- Develop and enhance the Tribes' SOPs and BMPs for restoring local wetlands and perennial stream channels to maintain water quality, water storage, cultural plant populations and other ecological benefits necessary for maintaining water quality. **(Core Element 1 and 3. Monitoring and Assessment, Voluntary Restoration and Protection). Winter/Spring 2020**