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Application Due Date: 4PM on October 25, 2016

CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE PROGRAM Ecosystem Restoration Grants

SFY 2017 Grant Program – Round 2 Application Guidelines

Background and Purpose:

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is pleased to announce the state fiscal year (SFY) 2017 Request for Proposals (RFP) for Ecosystem Restoration grants under the Vermont Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP). These grants are supported by the capital construction fund and the Clean Water Fund for the 2017 state fiscal year. CWIP's goals in awarding these grants are to restore and protect rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands from stormwater runoff and nonpoint source runoff and erosion sources that contain nutrient (phosphorus and nitrogen) and sediment pollution.

Summary of What's New this Round (See following sections for details):

1. The deadline for submitting grant applications for Round Two of the SFY17 grant program is: **October 25, 2016.**
2. DEC reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete activities. In order to be considered for partial funding, the applicant must structure the proposal to show clearly defined activities or projects with budget items and outcomes described for each activity or project.
3. Applicants may submit up to three applications, each containing one project. **An application may contain more than one project if:**
 - the projects are similar in project type (see list under Section A.5) and
 - the projects are within the same subwatershed or geographic regionSee the Application [Guidance Document](#) for examples.
4. The project budget cap for this round is \$400,000. The exception is a proposal that seeks a "Project Partnership Grant," there is no limit for these projects.
5. The new Clean Water Fund supports an expansion of funding categories and eligible activities. Please see Section B.3 for more details.
6. There are four separate project categories: (a) project scoping (assessments), (b) project planning, feasibility or design, (c) project implementation, and (d) river corridor easements (involving scoping, planning and implementation). **DEC will give priority to Category (c) proposals – project implementation.** DEC will support a project that involves project planning, feasibility and design (of all projects including easements), provided that this project demonstrates a high likelihood of future implementation. Applicants are encouraged to submit letters of commitment or other documentation that indicates that the project will move from planning and design to implementation in the future.
7. DEC will provide **additional points for implementation projects that are the result of previous scoping and/or design projects** through prior Ecosystem Restoration Grants. See Section A.7.
8. For stormwater pollution abatement projects, DEC favors projects that address a municipality's stormwater control needs.

9. **DEC favors projects that encourage infiltration or other Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) practices.**
10. Match will not be required for projects this grant round, unless the applicant is a municipality bound by the requirements under the Basic Guidelines below. However, **proposals that leverage additional funds will be favored (proof of match will be required in the final report).** These funds can include: (a) in-kind, (b) cash, (c) a low interest loan from the Vermont Pollution Control State Revolving Fund (VTPCSRF), (d) a low interest loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), or (e) other source. Match of 20% may be required in future grant rounds.
11. Project final reports **must include a spreadsheet** that lists all expenditures and costs regardless of proposed budget. A template will be provided. Grantees should be aware that all project related documentation may be requested in a future audit.

Basic Guidelines

1. All grant awards are subject to the availability of funds. Please note that some proposals may be wait listed, or funded at a later date, depending on the availability of funds.
2. All municipalities in the state, including Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) municipalities, are eligible to apply for Ecosystem Restoration grant funds for nonpoint source pollution abatement projects. MS4s may apply for Ecosystem Restoration grant funding but will be required to provide 50% match.
3. Applicants submitting large project proposals may be interested in obtaining a low interest loan from DEC Facilities Engineering Division. Planning and design loans are still available through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). Construction loans require getting on to the Priority List, please contact Terisa Thomas (Terisa.Thomas@vermont.gov) to determine probability of construction funding.
4. Pursuant to Act 186 (2014), CWIP has adopted a results-based system to ensure that grant awards specify outcomes to be achieved as a result of state support. Merit of proposals and the extent to which proposals will result in tangible benefits or improvements with measurable outcomes will be favored. Applicants are required to use the Performance Standards guidance document. See [performance standards](#) for assistance.
5. Equipment that enhances local Best Management Practices (BMP) implementation and maintenance, such as hydroseeders or high efficiency vacuum street sweepers and vacuum (vactor) trucks or trailers are eligible for grant funds as described in the grant application. Larger municipalities (>5,000 persons) will be considered for individual ownership. Smaller municipalities will be considered provided that the applicant involves a cooperative of at least four municipalities and equipment-sharing arrangements to improve utilization rates. All proposals for equipment will need to have in place an acceptable: (1) long term equipment maintenance plan, and (2) a solid waste (sediment) disposal plan (if applicable).

Eligibility and Conflict of Interest:

Vermont municipalities, regional organizations, non-profit associations, citizen groups, and state agencies are eligible to receive Ecosystem Restoration grants. Private citizens, for-profit businesses, and federal agencies **are not eligible** to receive funds. A partner can submit an application on behalf of others that provides funds for the practice, but not for the individual. See the Application [Guidance Document](#) for examples.

Ineligible projects include: (a) land acquisition, but may be acceptable as match; (b) projects that solely address flooding problems and drainage; (c) stormwater projects that do not provide for nutrient, bacteria and sediment reduction. DEC encourages applicants interested in implementing agricultural-

related projects to first seek funds at the [Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets](#) or the U.S. Department of Agriculture. DEC also encourages applicants to look for alternative funding sources for road-related erosion or sediment control projects at the [Vermont Agency of Transportation](#), such as the [VTrans Better Roads Program](#).

Respondents to this RFP should be aware that they will need to agree to [the State of Vermont Customary Provisions](#) (Attachment C of the grant agreement) in order to execute an agreement for this project. All applicants, if chosen, will also be required to complete a risk assessment questionnaire prior to issuing the grant award.

Tactical Basin Planning:

CWIP strongly favors eligible projects that are identified in DEC Tactical Basin Plans, associated river corridor plans or stormwater master plans by awarding more points during the grant application review process.

Applicants are **required to discuss** their proposed project with their respective DEC Watershed Coordinator during the preparation of their application. This step is to ensure that the Watershed Coordinators are informed of the project to help ensure that projects are priorities, targeting major problem areas that are contributing to surface water pollution. River projects that are in municipalities that have taken the active step of adopting river corridor and floodplain protection bylaws to reduce flood hazards will be favored, consistent with Act 110 (2010). A map of Vermont river basins with links to contact information for the Watershed Coordinators in each basin is available at: http://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/mapp/docs/TBP_Contacts_Map.pdf.

Project Amounts and Time Periods:

The project budget cap for this round is \$400,000 (no limit on partnership grants). Award notification is expected by early December. Due to a greater emphasis on the timeliness of expenditures, priority will be given to eligible projects that will be completed within a one or two-year time period from the grant date. If your project is anticipated to be longer than two years, we recommend that you use a phased approach to your grant request. All projects must anticipate a start date within three months of the grant award or they will not be considered for funding. Projects that require some amount of public financing, such as the use of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund or municipal bonds, will be permitted some flexibility in the start date. Applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis. Funding for projects is contingent upon availability of funds.

Application Submittal:

Proposals should be submitted in electronic format and emailed to David Pasco (david.pasco@vermont.gov). Please do not use substitute form or alter the format of this application. Additional materials supporting the application may be attached as separate documents. Please be sure to include the materials listed below. All materials are due on Tuesday, October 25, 2016 by 4:00 pm. Late applications will not be accepted.

Required Materials:

1. Completed application (this document)
2. Completed Risk Assessment Questionnaire (available [here](#)) or confirmation of completion of questionnaire in the last twelve (12) months

A. Ecosystem Restoration Grant Application Cover Page

1. **Project Title:**

2. **Project Location:**

Town:

County:

3. **Watershed ([List of Watersheds](#)):**

4. **Project Category (proposals will be evaluated within each project category):**

Project scoping (project identification)

Project planning, feasibility, design

Project implementation

River Corridor Easements

5. **Project Type** (please choose one primary project type)

Stormwater Treatment

River Corridor Easement

Road-related Runoff or Erosion Mitigation for private roads

Equipment that enhances local BMP Implementation and maintenance (stormwater or roads)

River Corridor, Stream, or Floodplain Restoration

Riparian Buffer Restoration (along rivers, wetlands and lake shoreland)

Wetland Restoration

Forestry-Related Runoff Mitigation

Agricultural Pollution Prevention

6. **DEC Watershed Coordinator Contact:**

Which [Regional Watershed Coordinator](#) did you contact prior to submitting this application?(**Contact is required**).

7. **Prior grant funding:** Is this proposal the next phase of a previously awarded Ecosystem Restoration Grant(s) (e.g. scoping, design or feasibility)?

Select Yes/no

If yes, provide prior grant number(s):

8. **Applicant Information:**

a. Organization Name:

b. Organization Address:

9. **Point of Contact:**

a. Name:

b. Title:

c. Phone:

d. Email:

10. **Type of Organization:**

11. **Funding Requested:**

12. **Additional Funds Provided:**

13. **Please include a map of the proposed project location.**

B. Ecosystem Restoration Grant Funding Categories

Review each project grouping and category below and then select the appropriate project category for your project. Only one group should be selected.

1. For MS4 municipalities submitting a stormwater treatment project proposal, select the most appropriate funding category:

Project Planning, Feasibility or Design – Involves project engineering design; CWIP will support up to 50% of the cost for project planning and design. Municipalities can provide additional funds via: (a) in-kind, (b) cash, or (c) low interest loans from the VTPCSRF, (d) a low interest loan from CWSRF, or (e) other source. Projects that demonstrate a high likelihood of construction within five years will be prioritized for funding.

Note: MS4 scoping applications are not eligible for funding. Planning, feasibility and design refers to a previously identified project.

Implementation – Involves construction, installation, application, or implementation of the project. CWIP will support up to 50% of the project construction costs; municipalities can provide additional funds via: (a) in-kind, (b) cash, or (c) low interest loans from the VTPCSRF, (d) a low interest loan from CWSRF, or (e) other source.

2. For all other project proposals, select the appropriate funding category:

Project Scoping – Involves assessments and project identification activities;

Project Planning, Feasibility or Design – Involves project engineering design;

Implementation – Involves construction, installation, application, or implementation of the project.

3. Partnership Grants: For applications that seek Clean Water Fund-supported Partner Funds, select the most appropriate funding category. Project proposals that offer match will be favored.

Work crew to support project implementation.

The purpose of this category is to support work crews that can assist in project implementation. Applications should include all costs (training of work crew, project planning, logistics and implementation) and must demonstrate the applicant's capacity and experience in this type of effort as well the ability to address the project types indicated below. The proposal should describe how the applicant will develop implementation projects and coordinate with the Watershed Coordinator and other partners.

Work crews must address one or more of the following project types. (Check all that apply).

Green Stormwater Infrastructure stormwater treatment practices

Rural and urban road projects, including Class IV road stabilization, stabilization of culvert headers on Class III roads, catch-basin outlet stabilization (20% municipal match required which could include trucking, equipment and materials)

Riparian buffer restoration (minimum of 35' buffers) using native, woody vegetation

Collaborative Projects Partnership Proposal

A proposal with a packaged set of multiple priority projects within a sub-watershed that focus on development and implementation of capital projects. These projects must provide watershed-based regional solutions to nonpoint source and stormwater pollution abatement problems. Proposals may include multiple project types (see the list in Section A.5). The proposal must be aligned with watershed priorities described in the tactical basin plan or other state-sanctioned plan. Proposals must be submitted by a single applicant on behalf of other participating partners who will serve as subcontractors. DEC favors proposals that involve three or more partners. Letters of support **must** be included from all participating partners. See the Application [Guidance Document](#) for some possible examples of a Project Partnership proposal.

Outreach and Assistance Partnership Proposal

A proposal with a packaged set of multiple priority projects within a watershed that focus on non-capital eligible activities. Activities include technical assistance, education, training, technology-transfer and information transfer that are directly associated with the implementation of water pollution abatement activities. DEC supports proposals that package together multiple outreach, training and technical assistance-based activities in a watershed. Individual outreach events (i.e., workshops, trainings, public/stakeholder input meetings) conducted under Outreach and Assistance Partnership Proposals must be reported through the Clean Water Outreach Efforts online form as a project deliverable (information on the scope outreach and using the online form are available [here](#)). Proposals must be submitted a single applicant on behalf of other participating partners who will serve as subcontractors. DEC favors proposals that involve three or more partners. Letters of support **must** be included from all participating partners. See the Application [Guidance Document](#) for some examples of potential Outreach and Assistance Partnership proposals.

4. **Equipment Grants: For applications that seek Clean Water Fund dollars for equipment that enhances BMP implementation and maintenance.** Proposals for equipment will need to develop an acceptable: (1) long term equipment maintenance plan, and (2) a solid waste (sediment) disposal plan (where applicable). Project proposals that offer match will be favored.
 - Larger municipalities** (>5,000 residents are eligible for individual ownership). Please specify type of equipment and water quality improvement value.
 - Smaller municipalities.** Proposal must be for equipment sharing among a minimum of four smaller municipalities. Please specify type of equipment and water quality improvement value.

C. Grant Eligibility Checklist

1. Eligibility:

These funds are available to address priority water quality needs that will assist the State in meeting existing or future Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) requirements. A proposed project is considered eligible for funding if it meets the following requirements (check all that apply).

Reduces Nutrient and Sediment Pollution – Designed to improve or protect water quality from runoff and erosion (e.g., stormwater runoff)

Provides Stewardship Commitment via Maintenance Contract (for implementation projects)
- Assures that the project will meet or exceeds its functional life. Describes a commitment, to be included within the grant agreement, to develop and implement a stewardship agreement or maintenance contract for the design life of the project. Includes the entity responsible for carrying out that stewardship agreement or maintenance contract.

Project Timeline - Project will be completed within a two-year timeframe, as directed by Vermont statute.

Eligible Equipment – If the project proposes the purchase of equipment, the equipment must enhance local BMP implementation and maintenance, such as hydroseeders or high efficiency vacuum street sweepers and vacuum (vactor) trucks or trailers.

All other requirements as indicated in the application must also be met.

D. Ecosystem Restoration Grant Application

Application scoring is based on the percentage for each section as indicated next to each question. Do not assume that DEC or the reviewers have any prior knowledge of any previous work or other information about the proposed project.

1. Relationship to Tactical Basin Planning (15%):

Briefly explain how the proposed project is consistent with an activity or action specified as a priority in a Tactical Basin Plan or other State-sanctioned plan (such as a River Corridor Plan or Stormwater Master Plan). Use direct references to plans where appropriate. Projects that are not directly referenced in Tactical Basin Plans as priority projects or involve improvements to stream crossings, and shorelands, and land protection are eligible for funding but are lower priority. See the Application [Guidance Document](#) for more information.

DEC requires applicants to contact watershed planners, who can assist the applicant in ensuring that the project proposal is aligned with tactical basin plan priorities. DEC will award points based on how well the project is aligned with state clean water priorities.

2. Project Scope (25%):

Provide a detailed description of your project. Include the location of the project and map of the location (as an additional attachment with your submission). Please describe: (a) the current condition of the water body, (b) the water quality issues/threat being addressed, (c) how the project addresses those issues, (d) whether the project is targeting critical pollution sources, (e) why the work is necessary and (f) the likelihood of success. Please indicate whether this proposal is a continuation of an existing project. DEC will award points based on severity of the current condition, magnitude of the problem being addressed, the public and ecosystem benefits derived from the project and its likelihood of success.

3. Collaboration and Support (10%):

Explain the extent to which you have identified and secured local support for the project including commitments from municipalities and landowner(s). Priority will be given to applications that include letters of commitment and support where appropriate as additional attachments.

4. Measurable Outcomes Described Using Specific Performance Measures and Milestones (15 %):

Using the [Performance Standards guidance document](#), select the top two performance measures and provide quantitative values as they relate to your proposed project.

Performance Measure 1:

Performance Measure 2:

Milestones and Completion Date:

Provide a table of anticipated task-based milestones, associated project deliverables, cost per unit (based on your performance measures – see [Performance Standards document](#) for reference) and payment per deliverable for your project.

The application must include as deliverables: (a) a press release prior to the end of the contract period, (b) before and after photos in high quality format, (c) input into the DEC [Clean Water Outreach Efforts online form](#) for all outreach activities, (d) an interim report half-way through the project, and (e) a final performance report in the format provided by DEC at closeout.

Milestone	Deliverable	Cost/Unit	Payment
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
TOTAL			

5. Project Readiness (5%):

Is the applicant prepared to implement the specific milestones within six months of receiving the grant award?

Due to greater emphasis on the timeliness of expenditures, projects that can be completed within a one to two year time frame will be favored and no-cost time extensions will be discouraged. Can the applicant complete the project within that timeframe?

Indicate anticipated Completion Date:

6. Itemized Budget and Narrative (20%):

Provide the itemized budget of the project including estimated labor and material costs planned to complete the project. Any work to be contracted to a third party/project partner should be included in the “contractual” line item, while the “construction” line item should be used for contracted construction work. Please provide additional budget detail for any amounts in the contractual or construction lines as an attachment to this application. All match information provided in the itemized budget will be required to be documented at the close of the project if awarded.

Itemized Budget:

Category	Requested Funds	Match	Total Project Budget
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Equipment			
Supplies			
Contractual			
Construction			
Other			
Indirect			
TOTAL			

Budget Narrative:

Please describe all costs listed in the itemized budget (including all hourly rates, numbers of hours anticipated, etc.). This should include details about your match items and calculations as well. Specificity of narrative will be considered in scoring.

7. Past Performance (10%):

Briefly describe other projects targeting nonpoint source pollution problems that your organization performed within the last five years. Describe whether the project was successful, resulted in future implementation (if a scoping or design project), your history meeting reporting requirements, and how you documented success.

Additional Points

DEC will give additional prioritization for projects that:

- provide match
- provide a stewardship commitment (where applicable)
- encourage infiltration or other Green Stormwater Infrastructure practices. For stormwater projects, GSI must be the principal management strategy in the application to receive additional points.

These points will be added in the ranking process. Documentation of match and commitment must be provided to receive points.