

Vermont Watershed Grant Application Guide 2020



The Vermont Watershed Grant Program provides financial assistance to groups looking to protect, restore, and enhance the biological integrity and public appreciation of Vermont’s lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. Funded by half of the proceeds from sales of the Vermont Conservation License Plate fund, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife distributes Watershed Grant money, in coordination with the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, to local and regional water-related projects throughout the state. Groups new to watershed protection and the grant program are especially encouraged to apply.

This Application Guide provides general information about the program and the application process. If you have additional questions or would like to discuss your proposal and application requirements, contact the Grant Administrator listed at the end of this guide.

Application forms and other information are available on the Watershed Management Division website: <https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/grants/co-opportunities#Watershed> .

Program Goals

Since its creation in 1998, the Vermont Watershed Grant Program’s primary focus has been to support watershed-related education and recreation and directly protect and restore Vermont’s watersheds. In addition, and more broadly, the grant program also backs efforts that work to improve surface water quality.

Watershed Grant projects:

- Protect or restore fish and wildlife habitat
- Protect or restore water quality and shoreline
- Monitor fish and wildlife populations and/or water quality
- Reduce phosphorus or nitrogen loading and sedimentation
- Enhance recreational use and enjoyment of a watershed
- Educate people about watershed resources
- Identify and protect historic and cultural resource

Vermont’s Tactical Basin Planning can help identify project areas or types that are more likely to be funded: <http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/map/basin-planning>

The following are not eligible for funding:

- Land purchases and associated costs, such as appraisals.
- Control or inventory of nuisance aquatic or terrestrial plants. Other grant programs are available to fund these activities (<http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps> or http://www.vtwaterquality.org/lakes/hm/lp_grantinaid.htm). NOTE: Proposals focused on education and outreach, greeter programs, new or experimental demonstration control efforts and boat wash stations, however, ARE eligible for watershed grant funding.

Who may apply

Municipalities, local or regional governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, and citizen groups are eligible to receive watershed grant dollars for work on public or private lands. Individuals and state and federal agencies are not eligible to receive funds directly but may be partners of a project. Only one project will be accepted per applicant. Applications will not be accepted from groups with open Watershed Grants from a previous year.

Other Funding Sources

The Department of Environmental Conservation also administers the Ecosystem Restoration Grant Program. The goal of this \$ 2 million program is to reduce and control nutrient and sediment contributions to surface waters from nonpoint sources of pollution. If you are considering a similar project, there first. A Watershed Grant may still prove useful if additional technical information (assessment, monitoring, design) is needed for an Ecosystem Restoration project at a later point in time. <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/waterq/erp.htm>.

If your project falls within the Vermont portion of the Lake Champlain drainage, be sure to check the Lake Champlain Basin Program. Since 1992, they have awarded nearly \$4 million and funded more than 65 important research and demonstration projects. <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/>.

2020 Grant Program

For 2020, total available funding is \$85,000. There are three project categories (education & outreach, planning, and implementation) and the maximum award per grant varies by category.

While all projects will be considered, the following are being emphasized in this year's cycle:

- Projects aimed at directly restoring habitat for aquatic organisms.
- Education and practical outreach concerning watershed flood resiliency and implementing measures to protect or restore stream/river corridor habitat.
- Quantifiable activities directed at protecting or restoring lake shoreline areas, especially those focused on controlling runoff and preventing erosion. For Flood resiliency planning go to: <http://floodready.vermont.gov/>. Lake shoreline management: http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/lakes/html/lp_lakewise.htm.

Project Category Types

1. Education and outreach – up to \$5,000
2. Planning, assessment, inventory, monitoring – up to \$3,500
3. On-the-ground implementation – up to \$10,000

Grants are intended for complete projects or discreet, identifiable portions of larger projects. Funds can be used for all aspects of a project including materials, labor, printing, and equipment rental. Salary or administrative costs are acceptable. Equipment purchase is also acceptable, if its more cost-effective than borrowing or renting.

Examples of Watershed Projects

Category 1: Education and outreach

- Educational programs for youth, related to wetland, lake or stream ecology.
- A community newsletter for lakeshore property owners to address shoreline and lake conservation topics.
- A workshop for road foremen on best management practices to address transportation-related stormwater runoff.

Category 2: Planning, assessment, inventory, monitoring

- Working with landowners to assess stream condition or water quality
- Assisting landowners and municipal road officials to plan and manage storm runoff from driveways, parking areas, and town roads.
- Water quality monitoring of town swimming holes.
- A survey of road erosion areas or local culverts to identify priority areas in need work.

Category 3: On-the-ground implementation

- Rain gardens or other infiltration-based practice to control runoff from stormwater.
- Planting native trees and shrubs to restore shoreline areas.
- River clean-up projects.
- Dam removal.
- Instream habitat improvements to benefit fish populations.
- Measures to improve aquatic organism passage, such as culvert removal or retrofitting

A list of funded projects can be obtained at:

<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/grants/co-opportunities#Watershed>

Applications

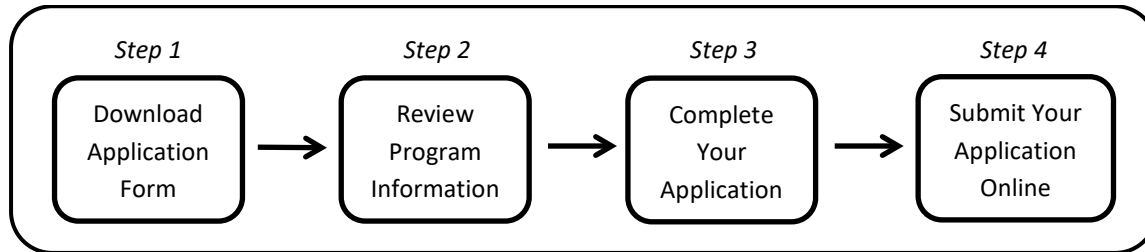
Watershed Grant Program applications must be submitted online in PDF format. During the grant application submittal process, applicants **must affirm that they understand the insurance requirements for grant recipients and have the required insurance or will purchase it if awarded a grant.** If you are not familiar with these requirements, please contact the Watershed Grants office well before applying and learn what's involved.

Tips for Applicants

- Project outcomes should be clear and achievable.
- Include estimated quantitative results such as miles of shoreline or acres of floodplain that will be restored or number of people the program will reach.
- Partnerships are important.
- As applicable to your project, consider coordinating in advance with key personnel in the Agency of Natural Resources.

Application Filing Instructions

Applicants must submit their application online no later than Friday February 15, 2019. Late applications will not be accepted.



1. Download the application form at the website listed at the end of the guide. Read over the contents of the Administrative Guide document.
2. Complete the application form, including site location maps, photos and letters of support as appropriate.
3. Convert your completed application to PDF format.
4. Submit your application by email to chris.powers@vermont.gov
5. You will receive a confirmation email as soon as possible and be notified in March about your status.

Project Selection Criteria

A Citizen Review Committee, appointed by the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife, reviews and ranks project proposals for the Commissioner's final approval. The Review Committee considers comments on each proposal arising from internal review. The Review Committee makes recommendations on project funding based on the nature, quality, cost effectiveness and priority of work being proposed, and evaluates applications on a 100-point basis, using the following criteria:

A. Value & Benefits to Result from the Project (up to 35 points)

Category 1: Education and outreach

Participatory; audience clearly defined; provides a long-lasting positive impact.

Category 2: Planning, assessment, inventory, monitoring

A previously established priority basis exists for the activity. The activity is consistent with a pre-defined protocol; plan for information sharing post- activity. Clear benefits will result from the project.

Category 3: On-the-ground implementation

Protects or restores natural, cultural or recreational values in the watershed.

Protects or improves water quality or aquatic habitat through an effective land treatment or best management practice; reduces phosphorus loading or sedimentation; landowner agrees to maintain and inspect installed practice(s) for a minimum of 10 years. Long-term benefits will result from the project.

B. Management & Design Considerations (up to 15 points)

Project design and work plan well organized; highly likely to achieve outcomes.

C. Public Support & Involvement (up to 12 points)

Local government or citizens contributing funding, equipment, or labor, local government has provided a letter of endorsement; project part of local planning; other evidence of community support.

D. Cost Effectiveness (up to 15 points)

Project leverages volunteers or other funds and resources to maximize results.

E. Stream Corridor or Lake Shoreline Habitat Protection & Restoration (up to 13 points)

Project will protect or restore in-stream, river corridor or lake/pond shoreline fish and wildlife habitat in a manner consistent with natural processes. Project involves education and outreach regarding stream or lake shoreline habitat protection or restoration, flood resiliency or related flood impact topics.

F. Special or Other Considerations (-10 to +10 points)

Other considerations, including application quality and clarity.

The application includes a budget table. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the application is complete and clear. Incomplete applications will not be forwarded to the Citizen Review Committee.

Grant Timetable

February 7, 2020 - Applications due

March, 2020 - Citizen Review Committee meets and completes ranking.

March, 2020 - Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife approves selected projects. Applicants notified.

April-May, 2020 - Projects initiated with signed grant agreements.

January 31, 2021- Submission and approval of final report and financial information for most projects.

Allowances can be made for grant funded projects needing more time. However, projects should be ready to begin before August 2020 otherwise grant funds should be applied for during a successive year.

Payment Process

Successful applicants will enter into a grant agreement with the Department of Fish and Wildlife that includes a work plan and payment schedule. Grans are usually divided into two payments; 80% upon signing and the remaining funds upon receipt and approval of the final project report.

If you have questions, contact:

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Website (to download application forms and other information):

<https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/grants/co-opportunities#Watershed>

Vermont Watershed Grants are administered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Conservation. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is an equal opportunity agency and offers all persons the benefits of participating in each of its programs and competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual preference, or other non-merit factors. This document is available upon request in large print, Braille or audiocassette.

VT Relay Service for the Hearing Impaired 1-800-253-0191 TDD>Voice - 1-800-253-0195 Voice>TDD