



CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE PROGRAM
Ecosystem Restoration Grants
SFY 2019-20

Ecosystem Restoration Grants
Application Manual

Please note that this document will be updated on a regular basis. Check the date in the header to track updated versions. For Appendices 1-4 see the Clean Water Initiative Program – Grants webpage

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# General

## Background and Purpose

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation’s (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) administers the Ecosystem Restoration Grants. The goal of the program is to support projects that will restore and protect Vermont’s rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and wetlands from nutrient and sediment pollution.

This manual provides guidance and examples for each section of the grant application and each step of the grant application process. Please refer to this application manual while completing the grant application.

## Application Timeline

Table 1 outlines the timeline for the Ecosystem Restoration Grants. Applicants must use the application form and may only submit one application per project.

Notification of funding will be given as soon as possible following the quarterly review dates. Projects will be expected to start within 3 months of the date of contract signing.

*Table 1. Ecosystem Restoration Grants Process Timeline*

<b>Grant Round</b>	<b>Deadline for Batch Review</b>	<b>Anticipated Notification of Awards<sup>1</sup></b>
FY 2019 Round 1	April 23, 2018	June 25, 2018
FY 2019 Round 2	September 10, 2018	October 29, 2018
FY 2019 Round 3	January 10, 2019	March 11, 2019
FY 2020 Round 1	April 22, 2019	June 10, 2019

## Eligibility

To be considered for a CWIP Ecosystem Restoration Grant, a project must meet eligibility requirements in each of the following categories; **Pollutant Type**, **Applicant Type**, and **Project Type**. Any applicants that believe their project may fall outside of the eligible categories listed below, must contact CWIP program staff for a determination. Please allow at least 2 weeks for a determination.

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<sup>1</sup> Notification dates are estimates and will be dependent on required approval by DEC and the State Treasurer’s Office.

General Project Eligibility Criteria:

- Projects with a primary purpose of improving water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution are eligible.
- Requested grant funds must be \$20,000 or greater per application. Applications may not contain multiple projects. Applications may contain more than one phase of the same project; for example, one application may contain preliminary design through final design.
- Land acquisition is ineligible for funding but may be acceptable as match.
- Projects that solely address flooding problems, drainage, flood mitigation and do not address sediment or nutrient pollution are ineligible.
- Projects that can be funded through other sources must pursue those funds first and explain why they are applying for an Ecosystem Restoration Grant. (See Roads and Agriculture sections).
- General outreach and education is ineligible.
- Projects related to compliance with Minimum Control Measures under the MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) General Permit are ineligible.
- Projects that are considered low priority for this grant program include: culvert and other stream crossings, updates to existing assessments or plans, equipment, and streambank erosion hazard mitigation.

*Table 2. Treatment of Project Proposals That Cause Negative Impacts to Natural Resources*

<b>Degree of Negative Impact to Natural Resource</b>	<b>CWIP Funding</b>
No impact; no permit necessary	Eligible for review
Project requires a non-reporting general permit from DEC	Eligible for review
Project may cause temporary impact (during time of construction)	Eligible for review
Project achieves net water quality improvement, has minimized impacts but requires a state permit	Eligible for review
Combined Sewer Overflow projects that involve green stormwater infrastructure that may trigger a state stormwater permit to mitigate negative impacts	Eligible for review
New or expanded development that seek funding for compliance with a state permit or state order to mitigate negative impacts	Ineligible
Implementation projects: it is unclear if project causes impacts or needs permit(s)	Ineligible
Project causes long-term impact (beyond time of construction) and cannot be permitted	Ineligible

## 1. Pollutant Type

The project must mitigate **Nutrient** or **Sediment** Pollution. It may address other pollutants such as bacteria or chloride but only if it is secondary to the primary pollutant (of a nutrient or sediment).

## 2. Applicant Type

Table 3 specifies applicant eligibility. An eligible applicant can apply for funding to complete a project on property owned by non-eligible entities if the eligible applicant assumes responsibility of the operations and maintenance of the project. State funds can only be used to cover project completion costs and cannot support the non-eligible entity's operations and maintenance costs. Ineligible entities may partner on a proposed project with an eligible entity.

*Table 3. Applicant Eligibility for CWIP Ecosystem Restoration Grants*

<b>Eligible Applicants</b>	<b>Ineligible Applicants</b>
Vermont Municipality	Private Citizens, Individuals
Regional Planning Commissions	Private Colleges and Universities
Natural Resources Conservation Districts	Private For-profit Businesses and Industries
Non-profit Private Organizations	Federal Agencies
State Agencies	Programs within DEC
State Colleges and Universities	
Public Hospitals and Medical Centers	
Public Schools	
Project on Private Land Sponsored by Eligible Entity*	

\**Sponsored* means the eligible entity assumes full legal responsibility of project, including operation and maintenance

## 3. Project Type

Please find the list of eligible project types with their definitions in Appendix 2 of the Application Manual. DEC will conduct an administrative review for eligibility and consistency with the CWIP Policy goals and requirements.

### a. Stormwater Projects

This category includes stormwater abatement and control projects that involve: (i) master planning or assessment, (ii) project design, and (iii) implementation. Eligible projects may include projects identified in an MS4 plan such as a Flow Restoration Plan (FRP) or a Phosphorous Control Plan (PCP).

Occasionally, stormwater assessments identify water quality improvement project opportunities in other sectors, such as agricultural and road projects. Proposals to conduct stormwater assessments must not include plans to develop designs for those non-stormwater sector project types, although the assessments could provide an alternate list of sources of funds for these projects.

Table 4. Eligible Stormwater Project Types

Eligible Stormwater Project Types	
<b>Municipal non-regulatory projects</b>	Municipally owned projects in non-MS4 communities
	Municipally sponsored <sup>2</sup> projects in non-MS4 communities
<b>Municipal regulatory projects</b>	MS4 owned projects identified in an MS4 plan (e.g. FRP, PCP) <sup>1</sup>
	Projects identified in a MS4 plan (e.g. FRP, PCP) on private land but project is sponsored by the MS4 <sup>2</sup>
	Municipally owned projects or projects on public lands that will be subject to the Developed Lands Permit (≥3 acre of unpermitted impervious)
	Municipally-sponsored <sup>2</sup> projects that will be subject to the Developed Lands Permit (≥3 acre of unpermitted impervious)
<b>Non-regulatory projects (Owned or sponsored by eligible entity)</b>	Stormwater master plans or assessments, identification, planning, design and implementation of stormwater projects
<b>Stormwater projects on agricultural land</b>	See Agricultural Projects section

1. 50 % cash or in-kind match required if MS4 is the applicant
2. Sponsored means the Municipality assumes full responsibility for operation and maintenance, or they are a co-permittee and agreement identifies O&M responsibility.

### b. Road Projects

This category includes municipal roads, class I through IV, that are subject to the Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP). An applicant seeking funding to implement municipal road-related practices **should first apply for funding through the Grants-in-Aid program or VTrans Better Roads program**. Applicants that were denied funding from either of those programs are eligible to seek Ecosystem Restoration Grants but must describe the reason for the denial.

Table 5. Road Project Eligibility

Eligible Road Projects	Ineligible Road Projects
Projects on municipal roads, including Class IV, if no other funding is available	Projects on private roads that are not sponsored by an eligible entity
Projects on private roads if sponsored by an eligible entity	Projects dealing with private driveways
In-stream culvert replacement projects on municipal land ( <i>lower priority</i> )	Maintenance activities such as re-grading, sweeping, or catch basin cleaning

### c. Natural Resource Restoration and Protection Projects

Natural resources restoration and protection projects are eligible if the applicant is an eligible entity. This category of natural resource projects includes all phases (assessments, identification, design, and implementation) of the following project types:

Table 6. Natural Resource Project Eligibility

Eligible Natural Resource Projects	Ineligible Natural Resource Projects
Wetland restoration projects, including mapping wetlands	Projects on private, commercial or industrial land that are not sponsored by an eligible entity
Floodplain/stream restoration	
River corridor easements	
Woody buffer plantings	
River corridor plan	
River project identification	
Dam Removal	
Stream geomorphic assessments	
Update or revisions to existing plans and assessments (e.g. river corridor plans and geomorphic assessments). <i>(Low Priority)</i>	
Lake shoreland retrofit, erosion repair using LakeWise principles	

**d. Agricultural Projects**

Projects related to agricultural practices and equipment should first apply for funding through other state and federal funding sources. To be eligible, applicants must provide the reason they were denied funding by another funding source or were only partially funded. Agricultural projects will be lower priority for CWIP Ecosystem Restoration Grant funding.

**e. Equipment Projects**

This category of projects includes the purchase of stormwater/road equipment with demonstrated water quality benefit to enhance/improve the application/installation of best management practices that will reduce erosion and control nutrient and sediment pollution (e.g., high efficiency street sweepers, and vacuum (vactor) trucks/trailers, hydroseeders). Requires establishment of long-term use and maintenance plan (minimum of ten years). If more than one entity, would require the establishment of an equipment share/rental program.

Beginning in 2018, funding for equipment is managed under the Municipal Grants-In-Aid Program. The [Municipal Grants-In-Aid](#) Program provides equipment funding for municipalities to purchase up to one piece of equipment that will support Municipal Roads General Permit (MRGP) implementation. Eligible equipment projects for ERP Grant Funding include equipment projects that have applied for and been denied through other funding sources or are not eligible for other funding sources. Equipment applications through the ERP program are considered lower priority and may only be awarded pending available funding.

Table 7. Equipment Purchase Project Eligibility

Project Type	Eligible Equipment Projects	Ineligible Equipment Projects
<b>Municipal Equipment</b>	Equipment projects that have been denied other available funding sources, such as the Municipal Grants-In-Aid Program.	Projects that can be supported by other available funding sources, such as the Municipal Grants-In-Aid Program.
<b>Agricultural Equipment</b>	Equipment projects that have been denied other available funding sources, such as the Vermont Agency of Agriculture’s Capital Equipment Assistance Program (CEAP).	Projects that can be supported by other available funding sources, such as the Vermont Agency of Agriculture’s CEAP Program.

**f. Forestry Projects**

This section refers to the identification, design and implementation of projects on forest logging road, trail, and/or stream crossing Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs) project(s) to address erosion to control nutrient and sediment pollution at prioritized locations. It also refers to Forestry equipment with a demonstrated water quality benefit, such as skidder bridges.

Forestry projects are eligible if owned or sponsored by an eligible entity. In stream-culvert replacement projects on state land are eligible, although they are a lower priority. The applicant will need to demonstrate that there is no other funding available to implement the project. Culvert projects need to show there is geomorphic compatibility.

Table 8. Forestry Project Eligibility

Eligible Forestry Projects	Ineligible Forestry Projects
Fords or stable stream crossings	Projects where there is other funding available.
Erosion control and stabilization	Projects not owned or sponsored by an eligible entity.
Culvert improvements ( <i>lower priority</i> )	Culvert replacements that do not improve geomorphology.
Waterbars and turnouts	
Skidder bridges	
Tree planting	

## Funding Sources

Ecosystem Restoration Grants are supported by State Capital Funds and the Clean Water Fund.

### Projects on Private Land

Applications to construct clean water improvement projects on private land are eligible for Ecosystem Restoration Grants. Some project types are typically sited on private land, such as floodplain restoration, woody buffer restoration, and agricultural controls on farmland. However, with respect to stormwater and road-related mitigation projects, DEC places municipal project proposals at a higher priority for funding than similar projects on private property.

Applicants seeking Ecosystem Restoration Grants funds for stormwater mitigation projects on private land or for road BMPs on private roads will need to: (a) demonstrate that the project will address a significant water quality concern; (b) ensure that the project is not for achieving compliance with a state permit or state order; and (c) include an operations and management plan for the life of the project (a minimum of 10 years). Projects on private land that have municipal support for operations and maintenance will be a higher priority.

### Funding Match Requirements

While CWIP currently does not require match (in cash or in-kind) for non-MS4 stormwater projects, the ability to provide match, through in-kind services or cash, is strongly encouraged and a factor in grant scoring criteria. The grant review process assigns up to 4 points weighted at 15%, for providing match, based on the amount of match provided equipment that is in existing use or prior purchased. The Match section under “Application Review Process Scoring Criteria” shows how points are allocated. Percentage of project match is calculated by dividing total match funds by the total project costs (requested grant funds plus the matching funds).

*Table 10. Match Eligibility Criteria*

Eligible Match	Ineligible Match
In-kind contribution such as time, labor, transportation, and other organizational costs directly related to the project	Labor and expenses for scoping prior to application submittal
Erosion control and stabilization	
Cash contributions from other funding sources	
Equipment	
Vermont pollution control grants	
Low interest loan from State Revolving Loan Funds	
Land acquisition	

The grant recipient will be required to quantify and document match which may be any combination of cash, supplies, services and loan funds (including clean water State Revolving Fund loans). Funds from other federal or state programs can be included; however, local match for those other federal and state grant programs cannot be included as match. Eligible sources of match funds are specified in Table 10, on the previous page. Note that future grant rounds may require match.

Stormwater treatment projects located within a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) community that would ultimately support the MS4 in meeting permit requirements such as Flow Restoration Plan or a Phosphorus Control Plan must provide 50% match. MS4 permittees include:

- *City of St Albans*
- *Town of St Albans*
- *City of Burlington*
- *Burlington International Airport (BTV)*
- *Town of Colchester*
- *Town of Essex*
- *Village of Essex Junction*
- *Town of Milton*
- *Town of Rutland*
- *Town of Shelburne*
- *City of South Burlington*
- *University of Vermont*
- *Town of Williston*
- *City of Winooski*
- *Vermont Agency of Transportation*

### **Calculating Percentage of Project Match**

Percentage of project match is calculated by dividing total match funds by the total project costs (requested grant funds plus the matching funds). For example: If you have a project that costs \$15,000 and are requesting \$10,000 of grant funds while providing \$5,000 in matching funds, your match is 33%.

$$\text{Total match/total project costs} = \text{percent match}$$
$$\$5,000/\$15,000 = 0.33 = 33\%$$

### **Tactical Basin Planning and the Watershed Projects Database**

DEC relies on Tactical Basin Plans (TBP) to ensure that funds are directed to priority clean water improvement projects. Priority projects are listed in the TBP online implementation table, the [Watershed Projects Database \(WPD\)](#).

Applicants must indicate the Watershed Project Database identification number (WPD ID) on the cover page of their application. All projects can be viewed by leaving the search fields blank and selecting the “search” button.

## Watershed Projects

Name	<input type="text"/>	Status	<input type="text"/>	Grant Number	<input type="text"/>
Project Type	<input type="text"/>	County	<input type="text"/>	Project ID	<input type="text"/>
Basin Plan	<input type="text"/>	Town	<input type="text"/>		
Grade Type	<input type="text"/>	Grade	<input type="text"/>		

ID	Project Name	Project Type	Status	Grant Number(s)
1	St. Johnsbury Stormwater Master Planning	Stormwater Master Planning	Completed	2016-ERP-1-02
4	Taylor Street Redevelopment - Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Green Space	Stormwater - Implementation	Funded	2016-ERP-2-11
5	Taylor Street Redevelopment - Bioretention, Stormwater Sidewalks, and Tree Filters	Stormwater - Implementation	Funded	2016-ERP-2-12
7	Towle Neighborhood Road Erosion Control - Planning and Design	Road Project - Final Design	Completed	2016-ERP-1-22

The WPD identification number is listed under the first column, labeled “ID”, on the page linked above.

Projects can be selected by name, project type, basin plan, status, county, town, and project identification number by using the search fields at the top of the page. If the proposed project is already in the database, verify the Project Identification Number with your Basin Planner. If the proposed project is not already in the database, contact the Basin Planner to add the project to the database and obtain the Project Identification Number before submitting an application.

**Applications that do not include a Project Identification Number will not be considered for funding.** Refer to the linked map for Basin Planner contact information: <http://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/mapp/docs/TBP%20Contacts%20Map.pdf>).

# Guidance on Application Sections

## I. Cover Page

### 1. Project Title

A satisfactory project title includes specific information on the project type and location. It does not include acronyms.

Examples:

- Winooski Watershed Floodplain and Woody Buffer Restoration
- Swanton Village Stormwater Treatment Engineering Design
- Smith River Corridor Easement in Johnson

### 2. Watershed Projects Database Project Identification Number

Insert the WPD Identification number assigned to this project in the Watershed Projects Database. See section on Tactical Basin Planning and the Watershed Projects Database.

### 3. Project Location

#### Town

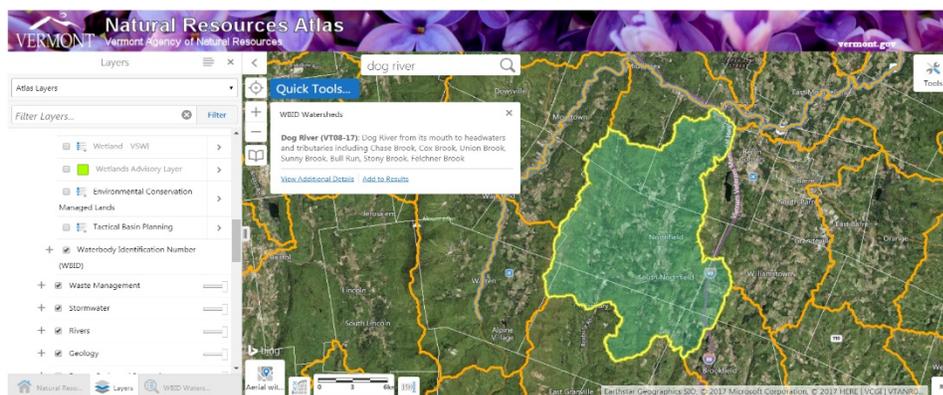
Indicate the town(s) where the project(s) will take place.

#### Watershed

Applicants must select the *waterbody identification number (WBID) watershed* (e.g., VT08- 17 Dog River) where their project is located. If the project spans multiple WBID watersheds, applicants may select the *basin* where their project is located (e.g., VT08 Winooski River Basin). Basins and WBID watersheds (i.e., sub-basins) are listed in the drop-down menu by name and number. Select the appropriate one.

For further information, WBID watersheds are also available as a layer on the ANR Atlas (<http://anrmaps.vermont.gov/websites/anra5/>) under Watershed Protection > Waterbody Identification Number (WBID) > WBID Watersheds, however this step is not necessary to be able

to respond to the question.



### Latitudinal & Longitudinal Coordinates

Indicate the center point of the project latitude and longitude in decimal degrees (to 5 decimal places). For applications containing more than one project location, include latitude and longitude coordinates with the corresponding natural resources map(s).

#### **4. Project Type and Project Phase**

Select the applicable project type. Refer to [Appendix 2: Project Types, Definitions, and Performance Measures](#) for a listing of project types and definitions available for funding through Ecosystem Restoration Grants program. Each application should only have one project type.

If the project incorporates multiple phases (planning/assessment, preliminary design, final design, construction/implementation) in the same application choose the project type for the most advanced project phase. For example, a stormwater project with 100% final design and implementation would select the ‘Stormwater – Implementation’ as the project type and ‘Final Design/Implementation’ as the project phase.

If the proposed project involves more than one component, the applicant should select the primary project type (e.g. if a project involves implementing a river corridor easement and installation of a woody buffer, the primary project type is the “River Corridor Easement – Implementation”).

#### **5. Is this Proposal the Next Step of a Previously Awarded Ecosystem Restoration Grant?**

If this proposal is the next step of a previously awarded Ecosystem Restoration Grant, provide the previously awarded grant number. Note the previous grant project must be completed before applying for the next step.

#### **6. Applicant Information**

Name and address of the organization applying for funding and responsible for executing terms of the grant agreement.

#### **7. Point of Contact**

Primary contact information for the person who will oversee the grant. This person will submit deliverables, as specified in the grant agreement, to the DEC Technical Project Manager (TPM).

#### **8. Type of Organization**

Select the appropriate category for your organization from the drop-down menu.

#### **9. Funding Request and Project Cost**

Indicate the total project cost, the amount of funding being requested, and the match

amount being committed in this application. These fields must exactly match the cost totals included in the budget template.

## 10. Project Visibility

Per Section 35a of the Vermont Legislature Capital Bill (H. 519), display of a clean water project sign in a publicly visible location during a project's construction phase may be required. Any implementation project with public visibility, as indicated in the grant application, would be considered for signage. Sign production costs are covered by the State, and do not need to be included in the project budget. Additional details are to be determined. Any sign requirements will be included in the grant agreement. If this is an implementation project, please indicate whether or not the project is visible to the public.

## II. Project Eligibility Checklist

The project eligibility checklist is intended to streamline project review for natural resource conflict and project readiness. If you have any questions or need assistance, please [contact the Basin Planner in your region](#).

### 1. Meets Goal of Grant Program

Indicate if the project meets the goals of DEC.

### 2. Required Project Support

Indicate state and local support for the proposed project.

#### State Support:

Applicants must discuss their proposed project(s) with the Basin Planner in your area during the preparation of their application and receive the WPD Project Identification Number. See the Tactical Basin Planning and the Watershed Projects Database section of this manual for more information on this requirement.

#### Local Support:

Attach as a PDF letters of support from the municipality and/or landowner for: (a) project completion, and (b) operation and maintenance over the life of the project. Both are required for implementation projects and strongly encouraged for preliminary design and final design where applicable. If the project is in the preliminary or final engineering design step, the letter of support should indicate support to complete the engineering design.

### 3. Natural Resources or Permit Conflicts

The restoration and protection of the Vermont's natural resources is a priority for the State. An objective of the State's clean water grant programs is to avoid funding projects

that cause negative, long-term impacts to natural resources, including those projects that cannot be permitted due to such impacts. CWIP defines “long-term” as any period of time that extends beyond the construction or installation of the practice, which can cause significant delay in the recovery of those natural resource functions.

Attach a project location map file for each project in an application using the Ecosystem Restoration Grant Screening theme layers located on the ANR Natural Resources Atlas. This theme layer is a compilation of individual layers in the ANR Natural Resources Atlas, which include ANR Basemap Data layers (Act 250 permit delineations, waterbodies, streams, parcels, and town boundaries), as well as ANR Natural Resources data layers (hydric soils, wetlands, flood hazard areas, lakeshore buffers, and river corridors). Refer to [Appendix 1 for instructions on how to create the ANR Atlas Map of the project location](#).

The purpose of the project location map is to provide a standardized method of project review. Project location maps will be used to indicate project location(s) by latitude/longitude and will help to identify potential natural resource conflicts. Applicants should make every effort to avoid these conflicts. If the project identifies potential conflicts, the applicant must explain in the project summary or in an attachment how the applicant has or intends to address these concerns. In addition, the applicant must have reviewed the project with the corresponding DEC technical program staff (such as the Rivers, Lakes or Wetlands program) and received their support prior to submitting the application.

#### **4. Timeframe of Project Start and Completion**

Indicate whether the project will commence within three months of the signing of the grant contract date. DEC understands that there may be limitations to project initiation due to time of year. Consider staging your project to complete those tasks that can be addressed early as you implement your project. If your project(s) are unlikely to start within three months of the grant contract date, DEC encourages you to wait until the next grant round batch review date to submit your proposal.

Indicate whether the project will be completed within two years of its start date. Eligible projects will need to meet both conditions.

Requests for no-cost time extensions are strongly discouraged and there is no guarantee that they can be accommodated. Previously funded projects that required grant amendments to accommodate time extensions may affect future award decisions.

#### **5. Operation and Maintenance Commitment**

Indicate the party responsible for operation and maintenance of the project. All proposed projects should be planned, constructed, inspected, and maintained based on the expected life of the project.

An operation and maintenance plan assures that the project will meet its functional life.

An operations plan is to include:

- A maintenance plan for each project to assure that the project will be in place and operational long enough to meet, at a minimum, its expected design life
- The entity responsible for carrying out that maintenance plan
- For equipment projects in non-MS4 communities, to file an annual statement, with DEC that certifies use and compliance with the maintenance plan.

Implementation project and equipment proposals, as detailed in [Appendix 3: Standardized Milestones/Deliverables](#), must include a letter of commitment for project operation and maintenance. The plan will be developed and approved as part of the grant agreement.

## 6. Risk Assessment Questionnaire

In the application form, for project eligibility checklist item 6-a, indicate if your organization has completed a Risk Assessment Questionnaire in the last 12 months. If you have not done so within the last 12 months, complete the questionnaire and attach to the grant application. The [Risk Assessment Questionnaire is available on the DEC website](#).

## 7. Road, Agricultural and Equipment Projects

In the application form, the application must demonstrate that the applicant has applied through other funding resources (such as the Municipal Grant-In-Aid Program, the AAFM BMP or CEAP Programs) prior to submitting the ERP application and been denied or determined ineligible. This documentation shall be provided in the attachments document.

## III. Project Summary (Maximum Words: 1000)

Provide a clear and detailed description of your project using the questions below. Inadequate responses to these questions could hinder the proposal evaluation process.

1. **Executive Summary:** Provide a brief description of the project. Include a description of the project location, the anticipated project outcome (what the project will accomplish) and the problem to be addressed by this project.
2. **Water Quality Benefits:** Why is this project important in terms of magnitude of nutrient or sediment reduction? Is there an immediate need for this project? Why do you consider this project a high priority? If possible, please quantify nutrient and sediment pollution reduction potential.
3. **Scope of Work:** Describe the steps you plan to take to complete this project.

The project summary must provide thorough information regarding the problem being addressed and the water quality improvement to be gained by the project. The applicant should **not** assume that the reviewers are familiar with prior designs, discussions and/or municipal/river corridor plans. Where possible, the applicant should include any estimation of phosphorus or sediment reductions that are expected to result from the project. DEC expects

that implementation applications with prior design (specifically stormwater) would have some quantification of benefits. The applicant should include in the project summary any discussions, reviews, or decisions that relate to potential natural resource conflicts (wetlands, river management, lakes, stormwater permits). Applications requesting implementation funds are expected to have finalized all necessary permits or have a plan for doing so in the application.

**Applications that require permits but have not included this information in the application will be deemed incomplete and denied funding.**

#### IV. Grant Milestones and Deliverables

DEC has developed a standardized process for all Ecosystem Restoration Grant funded projects to ensure a consistent approach for tracking project milestones and deliverables. The standardized list can be found in [Appendix 3: Standardized Milestones/Deliverables](#). If awarded, the standard milestones and deliverables will be entered into the grant agreement unless otherwise specified by the grantee.

Required deliverables for each project type include maps, final reports with before and after photos, and batch import files. DEC also requires a press release, issued at the *project completion*, as well as at least one additional communication/outreach method (e.g. Facebook post, poster in school or town hall, blog post submitted to DEC for the Watershed Management Division blog, webinar, etc.)

#### V. Grant Performance Measures

Pursuant to Act 186 (2014), DEC adopted a results-based system to ensure that Ecosystem Restoration Grants specify and record project outcomes. These outcomes, referred to as project outputs or performance measures, allow DEC to systematically track its progress in water quality improvement efforts. Performance measures are incorporated into DEC's reporting to the Environmental Protection Agency, the State Legislature, and the public on its progress in restoring Vermont's waterways.

Each project type has defined and required performance measures. See [Appendix 2: Project Types, Definitions and Performance Measures](#) for a listing of project types and associated performance measures. Select the appropriate performance measures from the drop-down menu and provide an estimated quantitative value and cost/unit for each performance measure. If you do not know the exact quantification, provide your best estimate. If the provided performance measure(s) do not accurately align with your project's outcomes, please: (a) select the required performance measure(s) and quantify the value and (b) choose an *additional* performance measure that fits your project. Add the additional performance measure as the optional performance measure 3. The required performance measures must still be chosen and quantified. The State will review performance measures for project proposals selected for funding prior to the execution of the grant agreements.

Payments will no longer be made based on performance measures. Payments will be made on a

reimbursement basis. See Budget section below.

All grant recipients whose grant agreement includes implementation at a publicly visible location are required to post a Clean Water Project Sign during construction, to be provided by the State and returned by the grant recipient upon construction completion. Please refer to the Clean Water Project Sign Guidance on our grants webpage for more information.

Quantitative Value in the application specifies the value/number/count of the performance measure selected. For example, if the performance measure is “acres of impervious surface treated” then the quantitative value reflects the number of acres that will be treated. Or, if the performance measure is “linear feet of stream restored” then the quantitative value reflects the number of linear feet addressed in the project.

## **VI. Budget**

Provide the itemized budget of the project(s), including estimated labor and material costs to complete the project, by using the updated budget template on the website. The budget template includes Excel formulas to automatically calculate the total budget costs. Ecosystem Restoration Grant funds will only support expenses directly related to the project.

The budget template includes columns for the total cost of each part of the project (personnel, travel, etc.), as well as a column for the match and the application request. The total request indicated in the budget must equal the amount requested in section 1 of the application.

The budget will be scored on cost-effectiveness, completeness and clarity. All costs listed in the budget (including all hourly rates, number of hours, description of supplies, match, etc.) must be fully explained in the budget form. Lack of detail or clarity in the budget will negatively impact the scoring.

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, construction, or “other” line items, as found in the grant application budget table, as an attachment to the application.

If the budget includes an indirect cost rate of 10% or greater, a federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) must be included in the application.

DEC requires applicants to secure accurate estimates for the proposal’s budget, including working with contractors to secure quotes/bids during the proposal development process. The quote should be itemized and applies to any project requiring work to be contracted out and must be included in the attachments. The following sample budget estimates are based on prior grant awards and provided only as estimates:

- Woody Buffer Restoration: Up to \$4,500 per acre.
- Stormwater Engineering Design: Up to \$12,000 per design.

- River Corridor Planning/Phase II Stream Geomorphic Assessment: Approximately \$2,400 per river mile.

Beginning in SFY18, payments will be made based on invoices in conformance with performance measures. Grantees will need to submit invoices for actual expenses that are consistent with the project's budget contained in the grant agreement. Upon request, grant recipients may submit multiple invoices per deliverable.

## **VII. Overall Completeness**

Competitive applications have been submitted per guidance in this manual, within the application form and supporting appendices. Applications that contain errors, are incomplete or contain incorrect information will be scored accordingly.

## **Application Review Process and Scoring Criteria**

Application scoring is on a point-based system for each project type. Do not assume that the reviewers have any prior knowledge of any previous work or other information about the proposed project(s).

The evaluation and ranking of the Ecosystem Restoration Grant applications are based on the responses to the grant application questions. The Grant Review Committee will evaluate the applications using the scoring criteria outlined below.

### **Project Summary (7 points, weighted 50%)**

Applicant must provide a description of the project, including: (a) source or cause of the water quality problem to be addressed, (b) the water quality improvement project or control action being proposed. (c) why this project is important in terms of magnitude of nutrient and/or sediment reduction and should be awarded a grant. Targets Impaired Waters: Addresses sources of water pollution in waters listed as impaired ([VT DEC Assessment of the Condition of Vermont Waters](#)) including federal and state required plans known as total maximum daily loads, or TMDLs, compliance with Act 64 of 2015, and the 2016 Combined Sewer Overflow Policy.

### **Executive Summary (1 point, weighted 5%)**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
1	Clear and concise overview of the project, demonstrates a thoughtful project with partner input, if applicable describes how other funding sources were pursued/explored and why ERP is the right fit (roads, agriculture, equipment).
0	Lacks detail, unclear the intent of the project, does not demonstrate the project is well thought out, and if applicable, unclear why other funding sources were not pursued first, does not provide the elements specified.

**Water Quality Benefits (3 points, weighted 30%)**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
3	Addresses the importance of the project for water quality, it demonstrates high nutrient and/or sediment reduction potential, and/or it demonstrates an immediate need/high priority for the project.
2	Addresses the importance of the project for water quality, demonstrates moderate need/priority, and/or has a moderate estimated nutrient and sediment reduction potential.
1	Addresses some nutrient/sediment issues but is a lower priority and/or will have minimal pollutant reduction potential.
0	The project does not address nutrient/sediment reduction as the primary pollutant, or it is unclear/lacks detail, or does not provide the elements specified.

**Scope of Work (3 points, weighted 15%)**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
3	Description is clear and concise, demonstrates the project has been well thought out and the necessary partners have been consulted, includes a realistic timeline, outlines permitting needs and/or steps to address potential natural resource impacts, and outlines where challenges for project completion occur.
2	Description includes enough detail to understand the approach to the project but does not include a timeline and/or inadequately addresses natural resource concerns or permitting needs.
1	Description does not clearly detail the scope of work, the approach is not appropriate for the resource concern, and/or does not address natural resource concerns and/or permitting needs.
0	May contain some or all of the following: lacks detail, does not demonstrate the project in a well thought out manner, does not include natural resource concerns or permitting needs, does not include a timeline, does not provide the elements specified.

**Budget (3 points, weighted 25%)**

Applicant must include a budget using the table provided in Appendix 4 which can be found at the [CWIP Grant website](#). Each cost item must be fully explained, including: hourly rates and numbers of hours per person; number of travel miles; equipment to be used, with hourly rates; and itemized costs of supplies to be purchased.

<b>Points</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
3	Current budget form used, budget is clear and complete, cost-effective, descriptions are easily understood, budget items align with eligible costs, calculations are correct, itemized quote included in attachments, NICRA (if applicable) included in attachments, costs in the budget form match the ‘Project Funding and Cost’ numbers on Page 1 of the application as well as associated attachments.
2	Current budget form used, 1-2 required elements specified in “3” incomplete or lack sufficient detail, less cost-effective.
1	Outdated budget form used, 2-3 required elements specified in “3” incomplete or lack sufficient detail, concern of cost-effectiveness.
0	Contains several the following: outdated budget form used, budget form incomplete, multiple errors in the calculations, lacking descriptions of costs, quote not attached, budget form does not match budget numbers in application and/or associated attachments, not cost-effective.

**Match (4 points, weighted 15%)**

Project proposals will receive up to 4 points for providing match with an overall weight of 15%, based on the amount of match provided. (MS4s are required to provide 50% match and upon adequate documentation, will receive the full 4 points.)

<b>Points</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>
4	50% match or greater
3	25 – 49% match
2	11 – 24% match
1	5 – 10% match
0	0 - 4% match

**Overall Completeness (2 points, weighted 10%)**

Competitive applications have been submitted per guidance in this manual, within the application form and supporting appendices. Applications that contain errors, are incomplete or contain incorrect information will be scored accordingly.

Points	Qualifications
2	Application is clear, concise, grammatically correct, filled out completely using current forms, and submitted correctly.
1	Application provides the necessary information to understand the project scope and purpose but could have been clearer and may include some minor errors. The application includes all necessary supporting documents and was submitted using current forms.
0	May contain some or all of the following: project summary unclear or lacks significant detail, inconsistencies, grammatical errors, budget form incomplete/incorrect, use of outdated version of the forms, attachments missing, submitted incorrectly.

## DEC Financial Operations Requirements

Grant recipients will need to agree to the State of Vermont Customary Provisions ([Attachment C of the grant agreement](#)) and submit the following additional information prior to entering into a grant agreement with the State:

1. A certificate of insurance to show that the minimum coverage is in effect (Attachment C, Section 8). Grant recipients shall name the State of Vermont and its officers and employees as an additional insured:
  - a. Workers Compensation (In accordance with the laws of the State of Vermont);
  - b. General Liability and Property Damage (\$1,000,000 per occurrence);
  - c. Automotive Liability (\$500,000 combined single limit).

DEC reserves the right to rescind a grant award if required documents noted above have not been submitted.

The State's Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants '[Attachment C](#)' document is available here: [http://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/files/purchasing-contracting/contracts/ATTACHMENT\\_C.pdf](http://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/files/purchasing-contracting/contracts/ATTACHMENT_C.pdf)

The State's [Standard Grant Agreement](#) is available here:  
<http://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/aid/Finance/SFA%20Agreement.pdf>

## DEC Contact Information and Application Submittal

Please direct all questions regarding the Ecosystem Restoration grants application process to Shalini Suryanarayana, [shalini.suryanarayana@vermont.gov](mailto:shalini.suryanarayana@vermont.gov).

### Application Submittal

Applications must be submitted in electronic format to [ANR.WSMDERP@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WSMDERP@vermont.gov) as two PDF documents; the first is the complete application, the second is all compiled forms and attachments. Do not use a substitute form or alter the format of the application or the budget template. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Document 1: The Application as a PDF. For the title of the document please use 'short project title\_organization acronym\_application'. For example, "LocationBuffer\_DEC\_Application"

Document 2: All other forms and attachments compiled into one PDF. For the title of the document please use 'short project title\_organization acronym\_attachments'. For example, "LocationBuffer\_DEC\_Attachments"

Items 1-5 are required in the following order:

1. Budget Form
2. Quote(s) and other supporting budget documents.
3. NICRA, if applicable.
4. Natural Resource Map(s)
5. Letters of Support
6. Other Supporting Materials, if applicable (i.e., Operation and Maintenance Agreements, Previous Design Plans and/or Assessments, Correspondence with DEC Staff About Project Permitting Needs, Photos\*, Documentation of Phosphorus Reduction Estimate Calculations, Stormwater Treatment Practice (STP Calculator) Reports\*\*, etc.)

\*Before and after photos to demonstrate project completion shall not contain people.

\*\*For final design and/or implementation projects involving stormwater treatment practices, phosphorus reductions can be estimated using the [Stormwater Treatment Practice \(STP\) Calculator](#).

#### Reservation of State's Rights:

In issuance of this RFP, the State reserves the following rights:

- To accept or reject any and all bids, in whole or in part, with or without cause in the best interest of the State;
- To waive technicalities in submissions; (A technicality is a minor deviation from the requirements of an RFP that does not impact the substantive terms of the bid/RFP and can be considered without a material impact on the RFP process, etc.).
- To make purchases outside of the awarded contracts where it is deemed in the best interest of the State; and
- To obtain clarification or additional information.

## **Confidentiality**

After conclusion of the contracting process, Proposals are a matter of public record. If an application includes material considered by the applicant to be proprietary and confidential under 1 V.S.A., Chapter 5, the application shall clearly designate the material as such and explain why such material should be considered confidential. The Vendor must identify each page or section of the Proposal that it believes is proprietary and confidential with sufficient grounds to justify each exemption from release, including the prospective harm to the competitive position of the applicant if the identified material were to be released.

Under no circumstances shall the entire Proposal be designated as proprietary or confidential. If the Vendor marks portions of the Proposal confidential, the Vendor shall provide a redacted version of the Proposal for release to the public. Notwithstanding the above, the Secretary has an independent obligation under Vermont law to determine whether any proposal material is subject

to public inspection and copying upon request, which may include material that has otherwise been designated as proprietary and confidential by the Vendor. The Vendor's designation of material as proprietary and confidential, and submission of a redacted Proposal, are provided to the Secretary for informational purposes in the event the Agency receives a public records request and will not result in withholding of materials by the Secretary unless expressly supported by Vermont law.