



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**

There are multiple rounds each year to apply for Ecosystem Restoration Grants, depending on funding availability. Please utilize the [Clean Water Initiative Grants Website](#) for information regarding grant round dates.

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

### **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.

#### General Project Eligibility Criteria:

- Projects with a primary purpose of improving water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution are eligible.
- 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 are 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, and streambank erosion hazard mitigation.

## Eligibility – Continued.

### General Application Eligibility Criteria:

- Applicants must use the application form and other supported materials corresponding to Ecosystem Restoration grants, found on the [Clean Water Initiative Grants webpage](#).
- Requested grant funds must be \$20,000 or greater per application.
- Applicants may only submit one project per application.
  - If a project spans multiple properties, it *may* be considered one project. For example, if stormwater runoff from one property flows and combines with stormwater runoff from an adjacent property, and siting of the stormwater treatment practice(s) on the adjacent property is the most efficient and cost-effective solution; then, the entire project (to treat the stormwater runoff causing adverse water quality impacts), is *eligible* regardless of the property parcels it spans.
  - If a project were to include multiple projects from multiple locations; such as, a stormwater treatment practice on one property and then an additional stormwater treatment practice on a separate (non-adjacent/unrelated) property, it is *not eligible* within one application.
  - If an applicant has questions regarding project eligibility, please contact CWIP program staff for a determination.
- Each application may only contain one project type, see [Appendix 2](#) for eligible project types.
  - For example, a design project cannot be combined with an implementation project.
  - Design is considered one project type; therefore, preliminary and final design may be within one application. It is important to note, if an application is funded for preliminary and final design, the grant agreement will include a check in with DEC at the completion of the preliminary design and determination if the project still has support to proceed to final design. If DEC does not support the project moving forward for final design, the grant agreement will be closed out.
- Applications must include all items specified in the administrative completeness review (Section VII of this manual) to be deemed eligible.

See Table 1 on next page 4 for further information on the ‘Treatment of Project Proposals That Cause Negative Impacts to Natural Resource’.

## Eligibility – Continued.

Table 1. Treatment of Project Proposals That Cause Negative Impacts to Natural Resources

Degree of Negative Impact to Natural Resource	CWIP Funding
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 2 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.

See Table 2 on page 5 for applicant eligibility information.

Table 2. Applicant Eligibility for CWIP Ecosystem Restoration Grants

Eligible Applicants	Ineligible Applicants
Vermont Municipality	Private Citizens, Individuals
Regional Planning Commissions	Private For-profit 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.

See Table 3 on page 6 for stormwater project eligibility information.

Table 3. 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 4. 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

Historically, 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). 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.

Currently, eligible equipment projects for ERP Grant Funding include skidder bridges, if they are of metal construction and not timber (to ensure they function for at least the duration of the operation and maintenance agreement, minimum of 10 years). See Forestry Projects, below.



**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 must to show there is geomorphic compatibility.

*Table 7. Forestry Project Eligibility*

<b>Eligible Forestry Projects</b>	<b>Ineligible Forestry Projects</b>
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	
Metal 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 maintenance 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. To be considered eligible, projects on private land sponsored by an eligible partner must include commitment from the landowner.

## 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. The Match section under “Application Review Process Scoring Criteria” details how points are allocated.

*Table 8. Match Eligibility Criteria*

<b>Eligible Match</b>	<b>Ineligible Match</b>
In-kind contribution such as time, labor, transportation, and other organizational costs directly related to the project	Funds already provided as match to other state or federal projects
Erosion control and stabilization	State funds
Cash contributions from other funding sources	Expenses that occurred before or after the duration of the grant agreement.
Equipment	Expenses related to political advocacy
Vermont pollution control grants	Expenses related to fundraising
Low interest loan from State Revolving Loan Funds	Expenses related to grant writing
Land acquisition	
AmeriCorps member time (host site fee/hours x number of hours worked on the project)	

The grant recipient will be required to quantify and document match. Match may be any combination of cash, supplies, services and loan funds (including clean water State Revolving Fund loans). Funds other federal or state programs may be included as match; however, match contributed to other federal and state grant programs cannot also be included as match for Ecosystem Restoration Grants. Eligible sources of match funds are specified in Table 8, on the previous page. Note that future grant rounds may require match.

*Natural resource projects* (forestry, wetlands, rivers, and lakes sectors) do not require match.

*Stormwater treatment projects* located within a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) community (see below) require 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*

*Stormwater treatment projects*, not related to an MS4 community (see above), do not require match.

## **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.

VERMONT OFFICIAL STATE WEBSITE

### Watershed Projects

Name  Status  Grant Number   
 Project Type  County  Project ID   
 Basin Plan  Town   
 Grade Type  Grade

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 Planners 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 Restoration
- Swanton Village Stormwater Treatment Engineering Design
- Smith Wetland Restoration Project 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

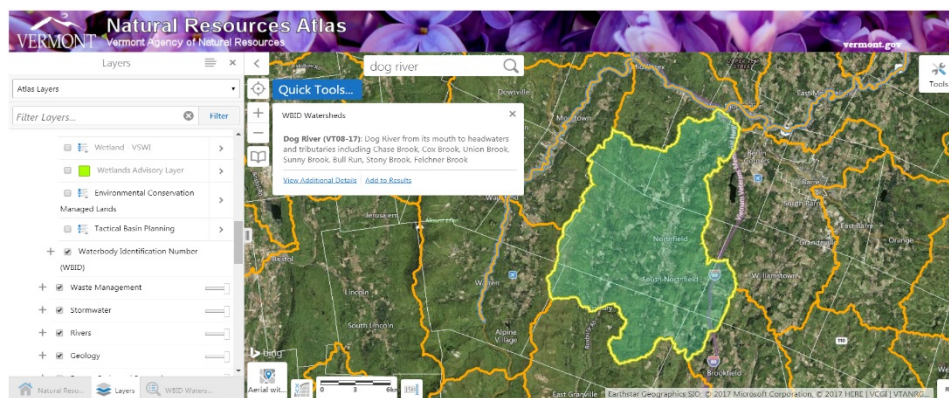
#### Town

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.



## 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 (only preliminary design and final design eligible for combined applications) in the same application, choose the project type for the most advanced project phase. For example, a stormwater project with 30% preliminary design and 100% final design would select the ‘Stormwater – Final Design’ as the project type and ‘Preliminary Design/Final Design’ as the project phase.

### **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 *(for implementation projects only)*

If this is an implementation project, please indicate if the project is visible to the public. If this is not an implementation project, please indicate N/A.

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, require signage during construction. Sign production costs are covered by the State, and do not need to be included in the project budget. Sign requirements will be included in the grant agreement.

## 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. Screening for Natural Resource or Permit Impacts

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 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.

#### Question 2.a.

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.

**Question 2.b.**

Indicate the DEC Program staff person the project has been reviewed by.

**3. Timeframe of Project Start and Completion**

**Question 3.a.**

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.

**Question 3.b.**

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

**Question 3.c.**

Indicate the anticipated months to complete the project.

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.

**4. Risk Assessment Questionnaire**

**Question 4.a.**

Indicate if your organization has completed the Risk Assessment Questionnaire. Eligible applications must include an attached up-to-date Risk Assessment Questionnaire. “Up-to-date” means signed within one year of the application submission date. The [Risk Assessment Questionnaire is available on the DEC website](#).

**Question 4.b.**

If your organization does not have an up-to-date Risk Assessment Questionnaire, follow the link in the application to the form.

**5. Screening for Required Project Support Readiness** *(for design and implementation projects only)*



**Question 5.a.**

Indicate if the project has the required municipal and/or landowner support. If municipal and/or landowner support is applicable to this project, include letters of support as attached materials with the application for submission.

**Question 5.b.**

Indicate that the letter of support has been attached, if applicable.

**Question 5.c.** *(for implementation projects only)*

Indicate if the project requires an individual permit for natural resources (wetlands, lake shoreland, or floodplain) impacts.

**6. Operation and Maintenance Commitment** *(for design and implementation projects only)*

**Question 6.a.**

Confirm that the narrative components of the application 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 helps to ensure the project will meet its functional life. The DEC [Operations and Maintenance Agreement template](#) must be used for all Clean Water Initiative funded projects. The minimum length of this agreement is 10 years.

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.

**Question 6.b.** *(for implementation projects only)*

Confirm that the application includes a letter of support from the party identified as responsible for the operation and maintenance of the project.

**7. Other Funding Sources**

**Question 7.a.** *(for road, equipment/skidder bridge or agriculture projects only)*

Indicate to what other funding sources have been applied to for funding this project.

### III. Project Summary

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), the problem to be addressed by this project, and potential permitting requirements and/or natural resources impacts. 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. 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 specified in the application. *Applications that require permits but have not included this information in the application will be deemed incomplete and denied funding.*
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. 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.
3. **Scope of Work:** Describe the steps you plan to take to complete this project.

### 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, blog post submitted to DEC for the Watershed Management Division blog, webinar, etc.)

Please review the milestones and deliverables associated with the project type. Indicate if you accept the standard milestones and deliverables that will be assigned to the project if funded. If not, please attached proposed modifications to the milestones and deliverables table for this project type. Applications will not receive unfavorable review for proposing modifications to

the milestones and deliverables. The CWIP program staff understand that some projects have more unique scopes and need more unique milestones/deliverables; however, the opportunity to propose modified milestones and deliverables should be used only if absolutely necessary.

## **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.

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 [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 at the bottom of the budget form must equal the amount requested in section 1 of the application. Applicants are encouraged to review their budget form prior to submittal, to ensure calculations are in the budget form correctly. Please reference the ‘Instructions’ tab of the budget form for more information.

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/construction” line item.

If the budget includes an indirect cost rate of 10% or greater, a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (Federal NICRA or approved State entity such as VTrans) 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. Please attach to the application any quotes obtained for contractual/construction work or “other” line items, as found in the grant application budget table.

The following sample budget estimates are based on prior grant awards and provided only as estimates:

- Stormwater Engineering Design: Up to \$12,000 per design.
- River Corridor Planning/Phase II Stream Geomorphic Assessment: Approximately \$2,400 per river mile.

Ecosystem Restoration Grant agreements are no longer performance-based, meaning payments are not made based on performance measures. Instead, agreements are cost-reimbursement based. Grantees must submit invoices for actual expenses that are consistent with the project’s budget contained in the grant agreement. There is no limit to the number of invoices a grantee may submit for one agreement. Achievement of performance measures and deliverables are separate from invoicing.

# Application Review Process and Scoring Criteria

## **VII. Administrative Review**

The DEC Business Office, in coordination with the CWIP program, will be conducting an administrative review for application completeness prior to moving applications forward for review. For an application to be determined eligible and move forward for review, the following criteria must have been met:

1. The application was submitted to the correct location: [ANR.WSMDERP@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WSMDERP@vermont.gov).
2. The application was received in the above referenced email, post stamped by or before 4pm on the application due date (see Clean Water Initiative Grants webpage for grant round dates).
3. The application used the current application form.
4. The application was submitted as a fillable .pdf (not handwritten, printed or scanned, etc.).
5. The application meets the goal of the program: Question 1.a. on page two of the application was selected as “yes”.
6. The application included a budget, using the current budget template.
7. The application included a natural resource impacts location map, see instruction above.

Additionally, the Administrative Review will include review for the following items. If any of these items are found, the application will move forward as eligible but automatically received 0 points in scoring for ‘Overall Completeness’ (see CWIP program review below).

1. The Watershed Project ID number was not listed in the application.
2. One or more required questions within the application were not answered.
3. Required documents were not included (or not up-to-date) with the application:
  - Risk Assessment Questionnaire (up-to-date if signed within one year of the application submission)
  - Certificate of Good Standing (up-to-date if signed within one year of the application submission).

As a benefit to applicants, CWIP in coordination with the DEC Business Office, are providing the opportunity to receive administrative completeness feedback about an application prior to the final application due date (as specified on the [Clean Water Initiative Grants webpage](#)), with the opportunity to resubmit to correct errors found in the administrative completeness review. For example, if an application is received by the early submission date (as specified on the [Clean Water Initiative Grants webpage](#)), the DEC Business Office will conduct the administrative review and provide feedback to the applicant prior to the final due date for

applications. This allows the applicant to resolve items that may have resulted in an ‘ineligible’ determination and to resubmit the application by the final due date. If an application is received after the early submission date but prior to the final due date, the opportunity for feedback and resubmission does not apply and determinations resulting from the administrative review are final.

## **VIII. Technical and CWIP Programmatic Review**

After the administrative review, applications are first reviewed by DEC Watershed Management Division technical staff (basin planners, rivers staff, lakes staff, stormwater staff, wetlands staff). These technical staff review for natural resource impacts and their comments are a consideration in the review by CWIP programmatic staff.

Next, the Ecosystem Restoration Grant Review Committee (CWIP programmatic staff and at least one non-CWIP reviewer from within DEC) review, score and comment on the applications prior to conducting an in-person review for project selection and funding. The Grant Review Committee makes recommendations to DEC leadership for final funding approval.

Application scoring is on a point-based system. Do not assume that the reviewers have 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 (3 point, weighted 15%)

Points	Qualifications
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.

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

Points	Qualifications
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 (1 points, weighted 5%)

Points	Qualifications
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.

### 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.

Points	Qualifications
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.)

Points	Qualifications
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. Or, was determined to be missing the Risk Assessment Questionnaire, Watershed Project Database Number and/or Certificate of Good Standing in the Administrative Review.

## 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 Grant Program contact Allison Lewis, [Allison.Lewis@vermont.gov](mailto:Allison.Lewis@vermont.gov). Please direct all questions regarding the application submittal 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, "LocationStormwaterTreatment\_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,

“LocationStormwaterTreatment\_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.)
7. Up-to-date Risk Assessment Questionnaire
8. Up-to-date Certificate of Good Standing

\*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.