

## Updates to Ecosystem Restoration Grant RFP and Guidance Document (Frequently Asked Questions)

### **I am concerned that the performance standards that I need to use for my application are not available as options in the drop down box and that it will negatively impact my application.**

The performance standards are what we use to track water quality improvements as part of our requirements to the EPA and to the State. If there are any required measures you must use them as they best align with your project, however, you are encouraged to inform us as to other performance standards that your project will meet (for example, quantity of flow versus treated impervious surfaces). Comments can be added into the application itself under *Project Scope* or in a cover letter. Your project will be evaluated on the responses to the application questions and the water quality benefit.

### **Can an application to the Work Crew Partnership Grant category also subcontract to other partners similar to the *Collaborative Project and Outreach and Assistance Partnership Proposals*?**

Yes, this is a partnership grant and partners are encouraged. An applicant to the Work Crew category is required to work with partners to find and develop projects. A successful applicant will be required to coordinate with partners (towns, watershed organizations, state agencies) to plan and implement high priority projects (e.g. top projects from completed town inventories, stormwater master plans, river corridor plans). Aspects of this work may be subcontracted to other partners Others can partner in this application and take responsibility for individual tasks (e.g. project development).

### **In the ERP guidance document for this round, it says on page 2 that priority will go to riparian buffer projects which "establish minimum of 50 foot wide buffers." My watershed planner informed me that buffers needed to be at least 35 feet wide. Perhaps this has changed?**

The performance standards document (linked in the RFP) does say that we must have an *average* width of 35' as a minimum criteria, but the guidance document further clarifies that we will *prioritize* 50' buffers. The larger buffers are our goal for the substantial water quality improvements, so we will definitely favor projects with buffers of that size.

### **Would an application to a partnership grant that includes outreach to the public about the importance of buffers and how to develop a buffer be likely to receive funding?**

The Clean Water Funds allow for outreach and education opportunities under the Ecosystem Restoration grant for activities "that are directly associated with the implementation of water pollution abatement activities" (Application p.6). Outreach to the general public about the importance of buffers is likely to be a low priority for funding. Outreach to landowners on a specific high priority section of a stream in need of riparian buffers that leads to a number of willing landowners moving towards implementation would be a higher priority for funding.

### **Would an outreach and education partnership grant application that involved multiple partners, linking the value of invasive species control and water quality, and involved invasive species eradication as implementation be likely to receive funding?**

The priorities for Ecosystem Restoration grants are highlighted on p. 1-2 of the Guidance Document. The focus for ERP funding is strongly on implementation projects therefore outreach and education

grant proposals should be designed to lead to direct implementation. In addition, all projects must focus on water quality improvement. While invasives education and management is a critical concern for rivers and streams, is not likely to be a priority for Ecosystem Restoration funds.

**Why can ERP funds be used on private property (such as a riparian planting or stormwater work on private lands) but not be used for work on private roads?**

P. 2-3 of the grant application (under eligibility and conflict of interest) states that DEC encourages applicants to look for alternative funding sources for road-related erosion or sediment control projects through the Vermont Agency of Transportation. We expect most road-related projects to go through VTrans funding opportunities where possible and VTrans funding *must* be spent on public roads per state law.

The Ecosystem Restoration Grant program has dedicated a small amount of funds for work on private roads (approximately 30,000). Work that is done at the intersection of private roads and municipal roads within the town road right of way or eligible for Ecosystem Restoration grant funds.