



Vermont Watershed Grants Application Guide

for Project Year 2016
Vermont Agency of
Natural Resources

The Vermont Watershed Grants Program offers Vermonters an opportunity to carry out projects that contribute to the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of waters through state grant funding. Half of the proceeds from sales of the Vermont Conservation License Plate fund the Vermont Watershed Grants Program. The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife distributes the money for local and regional water-related projects throughout the state. Groups new to watershed protection fund-raising are especially encouraged to apply.

This Application Guide, developed for the 18th year of the program, provides general information about the Watershed Grants and information on how to prepare an application form. If you have additional questions or would like to discuss your proposal and the application requirements, contact the Grants office listed at the end of this Guide. You may download the application forms and find other information at the Watershed Management Division website at: http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/lakes/html/lp_watershedgrants.htm.

Funds are available for Watershed Projects that:

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

Who may apply:

Municipalities, local or regional governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations, and citizen groups are eligible to receive watershed grant dollars for work on public or private lands. Individuals and state and federal agencies are not eligible to receive funds directly but may be partners of a project.

2016 Program Points of Emphasis:

For 2016, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) again has three project type categories. The total Watershed Grant Program funding available this year is \$70,000. The goal is to fund projects across all the categories. The maximum per grant amount varies according to the project category. Only one application will be accepted per applicant.

ANR has considerable interest in 1) education and practical outreach concerning watershed flood resiliency and implementing measures to protect or restore stream/river corridor habitat, and 2) activities directed at protecting or restoring lake shoreline areas especially those focused on controlling runoff and preventing erosion. A flood resiliency planning web site is available: <http://floodready.vermont.gov/>. A lake shoreline management web site is available: http://www.watershedmanagement.vt.gov/lakes/html/lp_lakewise.htm.

The following projects are not eligible for watershed grant funding: land purchases and associated costs such as appraisals, or control or inventory of the presence of nuisance aquatic or terrestrial plants. Other grant programs are available to fund nuisance plant control activities (refer to <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants->

[rfps](#) or http://www.vtwaterquality.org/lakes/htm/lp_grantinaid.htm). Nuisance plant project proposals focused on education and outreach, greeter programs, new or experimental demonstration control efforts and boat wash stations, however, continue to be eligible for watershed grant funding.

Watershed Grant Program applicants are advised the Department of Environmental Conservation administers \$2 million in state funds known as Ecosystem Restoration Grants aimed at reducing and controlling nutrient and sediment contributions to surface waters from nonpoint sources of pollution. As these grant funds are state capital construction dollars, use of these dollars is restricted to capital construction investments including feasibility analysis, design and engineering directly associated with a tangible capital construction investment. Persons interested in undertaking large or complex surface water quality and nonpoint source related projects are encouraged to apply for Ecosystem Restoration Grant funding assistance. Watershed Grant funding may be useful in certain circumstances for helping to fund projects where additional technical information (assessment, monitoring, design) is needed initially to support a successful Ecosystem Restoration project at a later point in time. For more information about Ecosystem Restoration Grants, visit the following web site: <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/waterq/erp.htm>.

Watershed Grant Program applicants within the Vermont portion of the Lake Champlain drainage are also advised of the Lake Champlain Basin Program and in particular their local implementation grant program offerings. Since 1992, the Lake Champlain Basin Program has awarded nearly \$3.6 million in local grants and funded more than 60 important research and demonstration projects. The local grants are key to implementing the LCBP plan, *Opportunities for Action*, at the grassroots level. Research and demonstration projects provide the sound science that is essential to implementing the plan. Applicants are encouraged to be familiar with LCBP's grant offerings by visiting: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/>.

Watershed Grant Program applications must be submitted online in PDF format. This process was revised last year to be more convenient for applicants. Refer to the **Application Filing Instructions and Due Date** at the end of this guide for details. During the online grant application submittal process, applicants must affirm that they understand the insurance requirements for grant recipients and have the required insurance or will purchase it if awarded a grant. If you are not familiar with these requirements, please contact the Watershed Grants office well before applying and learn what's involved.

2016 Project Category Types & Maximum Grant Amount:

There are three project category types. Category types and the maximum grant amount for each are indicated below.

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

Watershed grant funding is intended for complete projects or for discreet, identifiable portions of larger projects. Grant funds can be used for all aspects of a project including materials, labor, printing, and equipment rental. The funding of salary or administrative costs is acceptable for time spent on a specific project, or "start-up" funds of a new project. The purchase of equipment is also acceptable, if it is more cost-effective than borrowing or renting and crucial to the completion of the project.

Goals of Vermont Watershed Grants Program:

Goals of the Program are to support watershed education and recreation efforts and eligible projects that protect, restore, or enhance Vermont's watershed resources. A *watershed* is a river, stream, lake, pond, or wetland and the land and water that drains into it. The watershed approach recognizes the inter-relatedness of these resources. River basin water quality management plans are important documents developed by ANR that identify project areas or project types which the State is more likely to support.

An additional goal for the Watershed Grants and Ecosystem Restoration Grants is to work to ensure funding of the projects most likely to bring about improvement to Vermont's surface water resources. Applicants are encouraged to contact the individuals identified at the end of this guide to discuss which grant source is likely to be the most appropriate.

People across Vermont, including farmers and other landowners, town officials, anglers, boaters, loggers, biologists, regional planners have been working in partnership for cleaner surface waters for the use and enjoyment of future generations. In developing plans to protect, restore, and enhance lakes, rivers and wetlands, people realize the health of our waters is a reflection of the conservation or wise use of lands in our watersheds. Community-oriented associations have taken up conservation work and these successful local efforts are recognized and supported through program grant dollars.

Examples of Watershed Projects by Category:

Vermont Watershed Grants are a source of funds to enable municipalities, local or regional governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations and citizen groups to promote watershed awareness, reduce water pollution and carry out projects that may involve activities such as these examples:

Category 1: Education and outreach

- Development of educational programs for kids, related to wetland, lake or stream ecology
- A community newsletter for lakeshore property owners to address shoreline and lake conservation topics.
- A workshop for road foremen on best management practices to address transportation related stormwater runoff.
- Development of outreach materials or web content on watershed conservation topics.

Category 2: Planning, assessment, inventory, monitoring

- Working with landowners to assess stream habitat in order to protect or restore streambank vegetation to manage erosion and provide better habitat for fish and other aquatic life;
- Helping landowners and municipal road officials plan and manage storm runoff from driveways, parking areas, and town roads to minimize sediment and nutrients entering a lake or stream;
- Monitoring the water quality of swimming holes in town to find out if there are health risks and then holding town forums to report results and decide on problem solutions;
- Developing or revising a river corridor plan.
- A survey of road erosion areas or local culverts to identify priority areas in need of follow-up work.
- Preliminary planning required for a Category 3 project.

Category 3: On-the-ground implementation

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

A list of funded projects can be obtained at: http://www.vtwaterquality.org/lakes/htm/lp_watershedgrants.htm

Project Selection Criteria:

The number and types of projects funded for 2016 will be determined in part by the amount of available funds. A Citizen Review Committee, appointed by the Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife, reviews and ranks project proposals for the Commissioner's final approval. The Review Committee considers comments on each proposal arising from internal ANR review. The Review Committee will make recommendations on project funding based on the nature, quality, cost effectiveness and priority of work being proposed. The Review Committee will evaluate project applications on a 100-point basis, using the following criteria:

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

Category 1: Education and outreach

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

Category 2: Planning, assessment, inventory, monitoring

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

Category 3: On-the-ground implementation

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

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

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

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

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

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

D. Cost Effectiveness (up to 15 points)

Project leverages other funds, volunteers or other resources to get a lot done for the money. High benefit:cost ratio.

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

Project will protect or restore in-stream, river corridor or lake/pond shoreline fish and wildlife habitat in a manner consistent with natural processes.

Project involves education and outreach regarding stream or lake shoreline habitat protection or restoration, flood resiliency or related flood impact topics.

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

Other considerations, including application quality and clarity.

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

Tips for Applicants:

- Project outcomes should be clear, impactful and demonstrably achievable.
- Be concise and well organized in your writing.
- As applicable to your project, coordinate in advance with someone in ANR and revise your project as appropriate.

Grant Timetable:

November 20, 2015 - Applications due to the Vermont Watershed Grants office.

February, 2016 - Citizen Review Committee meets and completes ranking.

February, 2016 - Commissioner of Fish and Wildlife approves selected projects. Applicants notified.

April-May, 2016 - Projects initiated with signed grant agreements.

IMPORTANT: Projects should be ready to begin before August 2016 otherwise grant funds should be applied for during a successive year.

January 30, 2017 - Submission and approval of final report and financial information for most projects.

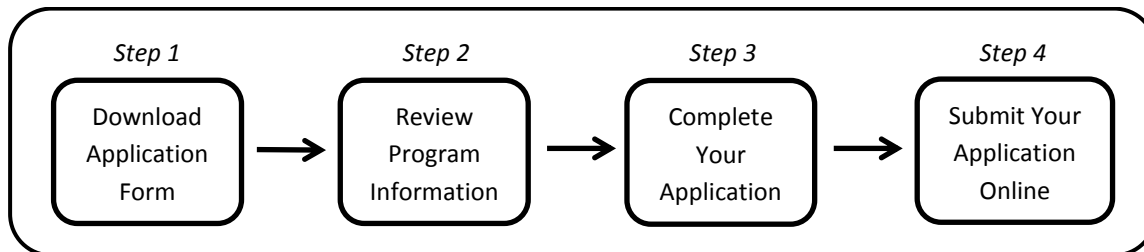
Allowances can be made for grant funded projects needing a longer time-table.

Payment Process:

Successful project applicants will enter into a grant agreement with the Department of Fish and Wildlife that includes a work plan and payment schedule. Watershed grants usually will be divided into two payments; in most instances 80% upon signing of the grant agreement, and the remaining funds upon receipt and approval of the final project report. Applicants are advised the receipt of grant funds is contingent upon obtaining certain insurance coverage. If you are unfamiliar with these requirements please learn about them from the contacts noted below BEFORE applying.

Application Filing Instructions and Due Date:

Applicants must submit their application online no later than November 20, 2015. Late applications will not be accepted. This diagram summarizes the steps of the application process.



Instructions:

- 1) Read all these instructions so you understand the entire process and requirements.
- 2) Download the application form at the website listed below. Read over the contents of the Administrative Guide document.
- 3) Complete the application form, including site location maps, photos and letters of support as appropriate.
- 4) Convert your completed application to PDF format. It is recommended that applicants avoid scanning text documents to produce the required PDFs. Whenever possible, please produce the documents electronically using word-processing software and then convert them. PDF conversion software, some of it free, can be found online; search *pdf creator software*.
- 5) Submit your application online at the website listed below. At the start, you will be asked to affirm you understand the insurance requirements for grant recipients and have the required insurance or will purchase it if awarded a grant. If you are not familiar with these requirements, contact one of the persons noted below before working on your application. You will then enter your contact information and brief project details. Next, upload your application PDF and any supporting documents.
- 6) That's it! You will receive a confirmation email, including your application number for use in correspondence. You will be notified in February concerning whether or not your project has been funded. Good luck and thank you for applying!

If you have questions, contact:

Vermont Watershed Grants office contacts:

Rod Wentworth: (802) 595-5179
E-mail: rod.wentworth@vermont.gov
or
Rick Hopkins: (802) 490-6115
E-mail: rick.hopkins@vermont.gov

Vermont Watershed Grants
Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Department of Fish & Wildlife
One National Life Drive, Davis 2
Montpelier, VT 05620

Website (to download application forms and other information and to register your application):
<http://www.vtwaterquality.org/lakes/html/watershedgrants.htm>

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

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