

2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control - Environmental Stewardship Program

Release Date: Friday, January 21st, 2022

Proposals Due: Monday, February 28, 2022

Meeting Minutes - Microsoft Teams Meeting
February 10, 2022 10:00am – 12:00pm

Presented by Kim Jensen (VTDEC Lakes and Ponds Technical Service Provider) and Rachel Green (Grants Management Specialist)

Meeting Minutes:

Kim Jensen and Rachel Green introduced themselves and their staff, Autumn Osgood, AIS Technician; Carly Alpert AIS Eco AmeriCorps Member; Nicole Streeter, Grants Management Specialist. Kim welcomed the participants and provided a brief overview of the conference agenda items.

Aquatic Invasive Species Program Overview

The grant program is administered by the [Aquatic Invasive Species Program](#), information about the program can be found on the VTDEC website. There is extensive information on the site including: laws and regulations, statutes, permits, early detection and spread prevention efforts, VT Public Access Greeter information, how to report an invasive species, methods of control, and the information for the [Aquatic Nuisance Control \(ANC\) Grant in Aid Program](#).

Aquatic Nuisance Control Grant in Aid Program Overview

A link to the Vermont Bid System official [ANC Grant in Aid Request for Proposal](#) is on the Grant in Aid Program webpage, along with all other required links to the application.

Kim reviewed the [ANC Grant in Aid Program Application Manual](#) and began a review of the application process and the participating cost program. There are three major changes this year that are important to note. The first is that the **final award will be based on the final total project cost**. Second, **deadlines for final project reports will be November 30, 2022**. This change will hopefully help people get their final reports in on time and in advance of the busy holiday season. The majority of 2021 final reports are submitted during the holidays which

causes a backlog, approvals for 2021 grants already submitted will be sent out ASAP. Final reports can be submitted at any time after the season, and well before the deadline date.

Aquatic Nuisance Overview

An [Aquatic Nuisance](#) is defined in the Vermont State Statute. While most aquatic nuisance control programs are non-native invasive species, some projects while rare, may be for an aggressive native species. Native species management projects usually score very low because these types of projects are ranked as a low priority of the state. The priority is to address the invasive species causing ecological, recreational, and economic harm.

Eligibility

Municipalities or agencies of the state are eligible. Applicants are strongly suggested to apply through Regional Partners. **This year there will be only one payment instead of two, unless applicants go through a Regional Partner.** Only Regional Partners will get split funding (40% in July/August, and 60% upon approval of the final report.)

Funding Priorities and Criteria

First Priority: Projects designed to manage new introductions of aquatic nuisances.

Second Priority: Projects that prevent or control the spread (Ex. Greeter Programs)

Third Priority: Maintenance/management projects (Ex. handpulling, bottom barriers, mechanical harvesting, herbicide projects)

Additional priorities and criteria include whether there is local interest and support, public access and recreational interests, whether there is high probability of achieving the goal, and how necessary the project is at reducing the threat of spread of the invasive species.

Developmental programs get priority over long-term maintenance programs. If all the criteria are met then an award will likely be granted.

Project Category Types

[Greeter Projects](#): Supports hiring public access greeters at access areas. These projects prevent the spread of invasive species through education, and equipment inspections designed to catch invasive species “hitching a ride” from one waterbody to another. Generally, these projects are provided 40% of the total project cost.

Aquatic Invasive Plant Surveys (Point Intercept Surveys) that are completed by accredited contractors will now be included in this category.

VTDEC loaner iPads are available for applicants, given the completion of the [Temporary Equipment Use Request Form](#). If applicants would rather purchase their own iPad, they must include it in their grant proposal.

Be sure to use the official access area name when filling out the Greeter Project Sheet. Total greeter hours includes only hired staff, and does not include volunteer hours; volunteer hours can be estimated and included in the budget, but not on the application project sheet. Reminder that volunteer hours are required to be logged for final reports in the case of an audit.

[Education, Outreach, and Survey Project](#): This category is specifically for scientific studies, surveys, or early detection events that assist the AIS Program to complete its mission. (Ex. Lake Champlain Committee's study looking at the impacts of Zebra mussels on native mussels.)

[Management Projects](#): This category is for early detection rapid response projects to eradicate a new infestation, to long term maintenance projects. Generally, these projects are provided 20-25% of the total project cost.

Aquatic Invasive Plant Surveys (Point Intercept Surveys) or long-term management plans that are completed by accredited contractors will now be included in this category. A list of accredited contractors can be found on pages 9 & 10 from the [Resource Guide for Vermont Lake Managers](#).

Be sure to accurately describe the work that goes into the management project, rather than describing general information about the impacts of invasive species which is already known by the AIS Program. Rather speak to the details of the specific project. Also include any other local efforts. All the questions refer to scoreable items that are considered by the Grant Review Team. These projects also need a map included in the application that can be from the ANC Permit. A link to the Vermont ANR Atlas is [here](#) and orientation video is available on the website. *(A screen shot of a Google Map marked up is ok to submit)*. Greeter Projects do not need a map.

Grant in Aid Awards

The Aquatic Nuisance Control Grant in Aid Program provided 75% of total project costs in the past when there were relatively few applicants with small projects. However now there are many applicants with larger projects, so on average approximately 25% of total project costs are funded. Award amounts are configured based on proposed total project costs, and therefore it's required to complete the entire project as was proposed. This year the maximum award amount will be granted, and then provided based on the final total project cost.

This year the program has \$450,000 from motorboat registration fees for funding. It's expected that next year there will only be \$350,000. Unfortunately, the program may have to develop a competitive bid process, or not be able to fund a category, rather than funding a portion of all projects.

The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds (FOVLAP) are working with legislators to develop an AIS decal for out-of-state motorboat registrations that would be earmarked to the aquatic invasive species funds. For more information, please contact [FOVLAP](#).

Completing the Application

In an effort to reduce paperwork, many documents are no longer necessary to submit for the application or will be for the reports. However, grantees are still required to maintain documentation for all aspects of the grant project for auditing purposes. One major category that may need attention by grantees is **documenting and all non-cash contributions** including logging volunteer hours, invoices for any “service” that was donated (i.e., dock rental space, harvester hours, etc.). The documents are not necessary to submit with final reports but are required to be maintained.

2022 ANC Final Awards will be based on the final total project costs (cash and non-cash expenses). An award cannot be provided that covers non-cash expenses. For example, a maximum award amount is \$4,000 based on the proposed total project cost of \$10,000 that included \$5,000 in cash and \$5,000 in non-cash expenses. During the season, the total project costs cash expenses changed to include \$2,500 cash and \$7,500 non-cash expenses. Only \$2,500 of the award of the \$4,000 maximum award may be provided.

If applicants do more than proposed, unfortunately, they are unable to receive more than the maximum award amount.

When completing the [Cover Page](#), it is very important applicants include all the requested information, especially the project contact information. Note, if applying through a Regional Partner, the applicant would still be the town if the town provides any assistance in the form of insurance to the lake association. Ex. Lake Bomoseen folks receive insurance through the town of Hubbardton so they apply as Hubbardton.

The applicant should include any municipal zoning bylaws (this will result in a point!) A special use permit is required if the greeter project is at a Fish and Wildlife site, be sure to check that box. These boxes are in section nine of the [Cover Page](#).

If an Aquatic Nuisance Control (ANC) Permit are required for management projects (bottom barriers, diver operation suction harvesting, mechanical harvesting, and herbicide) applicants should already have secured or applied for an aquatic nuisance control permit and are required to meet the permit conditions. The ANC Permit contact is Misha Cetner, Misha.Cetner@vermont.gov

For each project, applicants need to fill out a Project Sheet (different depending on if it's a Greeter Project, Education/Outreach/Survey Project, or Management Project) AND a project

Budget Sheet. Please do not combine multiple projects on the Budget Sheet. This allows the Grant Review Team to fairly compare the different types of projects.

Project Budget Sheet

Any direct cash expenses should go into column A (Ex. Municipal staff, Greeters, Contractors being paid to do work.) Equipment and supplies (Ex. Masks for Greeters, a new shed) also belongs in Column A. Anything that's non-cash should go in column B (i.e., volunteers, donated services, etc.). Totals from Column A and Column B equals Column C Total Project Cost, which will automatically display in the yellow cell. A maximum award cannot be more than the cash expenses. The applicant should include if they're getting funds from any other sources. Cash donations do not negate the maximum award that may be provided if reasonable, and is provided to build the capacity for the project.

Please use the suggested rates when configuring volunteer services rates and not inflate rates based on prior professional experiences that are not utilized for the purposes of the project. Ineligible expenses include things like hosting events, time taken to apply for the grant, food, fundraising, office supplies. Fringe benefits can include workers comp, social security, etc. Boating can be included in the mileage section. All donations and donated services are required to be documented in case of an audit.

All required materials are found on the AIS Program [Grant in Aid webpage](#). Completed applications are to be submitted (preferably as a PDF) to anr.widfinancial@vermont.gov. Do not email them to Kim nor Nicole. Kim is happy to review invoices and final reports but is unable to review applications nor proposals. It's important to keep excellent record of everything that goes into your project, in the case of an audit. Form 430 M is no longer required to submit with the application.