



## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR CLEAN WATER PROJECTS** in the Memphremagog Basin (Basin 17)

**For 2024, Water Quality Restoration Formula Grant project proposals are due three weeks prior to the following Basin Water Quality Council meeting dates below:**

**May 9<sup>th</sup>**

**October 4<sup>th</sup>**

**December 6<sup>th</sup>**

### **Introduction**

The Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB), in its role as the Clean Water Service (CWSP) Provider for Basin 17, is accepting funding applications for projects that improve water quality in Basin 17, with a focus on projects that lead to a substantial reduction in phosphorus runoff into surface waters. Projects must be in line with the vision set forth by Act 76, [the Clean Water Service Delivery Act](#), and policies and guidance set forth by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to implement the Act.

### **Eligible Projects**

Projects eligible for funding must be best management practices or other programs designed to improve water quality. Projects must not be required by a permit (10 V.S.A, Chapter 47), or subject to the requirements of Vermont Agricultural Water Quality statutes (6 V.S.A, Chapter 215). Funding may be available for the portion of projects that exceed requirements set forth in the statutes above. Project eligibility shall be determined by the Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) [FY23 Funding Policy](#) issued December 2022.



**Eligible Project Types:** The following list details the most applicable project which are eligible. For details on all eligible project types, please refer to [Appendix B](#) of the CWIP FY23 funding policy.

- Restoration/reconnection and protection of floodplains, river corridors and/or wetlands
- Riparian and lakeshore corridor protection, stabilization/restoration and tree plantings
- Natural woody buffers associated with riparian, lakeshore, and wetland protection and restoration
- Conservation easements (river corridor, wetland buffer, etc.)
- Sub-jurisdictional practices related to developed lands
- Traditional stormwater treatment and road project BMPs may qualify if phosphorus reduction exceeds regulatory requirements
- Forestry projects that provide water quality protection and restoration beyond the requirements of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation Acceptable Management Practices
- Projects on agricultural land if the farm in question does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for the Required Agricultural Practices to apply, and
- Natural resource restoration projects on a jurisdictional farm if confirmed by the VT Agency of Agriculture
- Lake Watershed Action Plans
- Lake Wise Assessments
- Project Development

**Eligible Project Phases:** Complete definitions of project phases can be found in Appendix D of the Clean Water Initiative Program FY23 funding policy,

- Project Identification\*
- Project Development\*
- Preliminary Design – work needed to develop a 30% engineering design
- Final Design - securing landowner access agreement and developing a 100% design or equivalent
- Implementation - project construction or its equivalent
- Operations and Maintenance

*\*For ID/Assessment and Project Development proposals, please fill out the Project Development/ID application and refer to the [DEC Project Development Standard Operating Procedures](#)*



## Eligible Entities

The CWSP is authorized to provide grant funding to non-profit watershed organizations, natural resource conservation districts, regional planning commissions, other non-profit organizations, and municipalities. Projects not sponsored by one of these entities may still be eligible for funding via contracted services. Ineligible entities include: Private citizens, individuals; Private for-profit businesses and industries; Private for-profit colleges and universities; Federal agencies.

*NOTE: The Memphremagog CWSP (VHCB) has issued a Request for Qualifications to identify (pre-qualify) eligible entities interested in serving as CWSP Project Managers. These prequalified organizations and municipalities will receive funding from VHCB to sponsor, manage, and implement non-regulatory projects to improve water quality within the Memphremagog Basin. For more information contact Nathanael Johns: [n.johns@vhcb.org](mailto:n.johns@vhcb.org)*

## Evaluation Process

All projects (except Identification/Assessment and Development Projects) will be evaluated using the Memphremagog Basin CWSPs prioritization system. This analysis emphasizes phosphorous reduction benefits (estimated for cost effectiveness using the [Interim Phosphorus Reduction Calculator Tool v1.0](#)) developed by the DEC. Developed Land projects will be evaluated using the [DEC Stormwater Treatment Practice Calculator](#).

Project ID and Development project review will be based on:

- Project Certainty/Risk (10 points)
- Conformance with basin plan (40 points)
- Cost
  - <\$10,000 (25 points)
  - \$10,000-\$20,000 (10 points)
  - >\$20,000 (0 points)
- Phosphorus-reduction potential
  - High (25 points)
  - Medium (10 points)
  - Low (0 points)

Design and/or Implementation project review will be based on the following scoring rubric:

- Phosphorus Reduction Cost/Effectiveness (60 points)
- Co-Benefits, see list below (20 points)
- Design Life, O&M (8 points)
- Project Certainty/Risk (8 points)
- Conformance with basin plan (4 points)



**CO-BENEFITS**

**Environmental Justice**

- Prioritizes vulnerable communities
- Engages community stakeholders
- Honors traditional ecological knowledge
- Improves access to clean water and food
- Protects sacred resources and indigenous land
- Other

**Key Pollutants Other Than Phosphorus**

- Nitrogen, road salts, plastic/microplastics
- Sediment
- Pathogens
- Heavy metals
- Sewage/wastewater
- Contaminants of emerging concern
- Other

**Ecosystem Services/Climate Resiliency**

- Flood resiliency and hazard mitigation
- Reduces runoff and erosion
- Carbon sequestration
- Enhances biodiversity, including native pollinator species
- Reduces spread of aquatic and/or terrestrial invasive species
- Improves aquatic and terrestrial habitat and/or connectivity
- Addresses high risk areas due to past environmental degradation
- Other

**Recreation and Community Enhancement**

- Enhances accessibility to local natural areas
- Provides or improves outdoor recreation
- Protects green spaces and improves aesthetics
- Enhances health and wellness
- Increases tree canopy near recreational/community areas
- Public/private partnership
- Other



**Education Benefit**

Includes watershed education and awareness of environmental problems

Promotes trust among communities, scientists and agencies

Project visibility and community outreach

Includes community volunteers

Other

**Enhances Local Economy**

Job creation, retention and workforce development

Promotes sustainable energy practices

Increases property values

Other

Likelihood of success (certainty/risk) will be evaluated based upon landowner relations, the demonstrated ability of the sponsoring organization to carry out projects, and the likelihood that the final project will be implemented and maintained. Possible co-benefits may include, but are not limited to: environmental justice, other pollutants addressed, ecosystem services and climate resilience, recreation and community enhancement, education benefits and local economic enhancement.

A list or lists of eligible projects will be presented to the CWSPs Basin Water Quality Council (BWQC). The BWQC will meet at least quarterly to evaluate projects and recommend qualified projects for advancement. The CWSP and BWQC will evaluate projects based on the Memphremagog Basin CWSPs prioritization system, and the BWQC may adjust the score assigned for Co-Benefits.

NEW REQUIREMENT: The CWIP [FY23 Funding Policy](#) requires review by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) of any non-exempt Clean Water projects funded by DEC. The [Vermont Division for Historic Preservation Project Review Form](#) is to be used for both the Preliminary and Final Project Review for Clean Water projects. Learn more about VDHP review of CWIP Clean Water Projects here: [VT Division for Historic Preservation Review of Clean Water Projects Public Training - YouTube](#) (click “browse youtube” on landing page).



## **Awards Process**

Determination of project awards will take place at a BWQC meeting. Once the BWQC identifies projects for funding and the CWSP confirms the project's eligibility, they will take one of the two paths below.

1. For projects with a sponsor that is an eligible entity for subgrants, the CWSP will determine if the entity has the experience and financial and staffing capacity to carry out the project. If so, the CWSP will develop a subgrant with the sponsoring entity. If not, the project will follow the second path.

For projects lacking an eligible sponsor, or if the sponsor does not have the capacity to manage the project, the CWSP will either manage the project or identify another entity to manage the project following the CWSPs procurement process.

## **Timeframe**

Project applications approved by the BWQC will then go to the CWSP Executive Director for final review and approval. Applicants can expect an award letter from the CWSP within two weeks of the BWQC meeting and a fully executed task order for the project within two weeks of the award letter. Grantees may begin to incur costs at the time of a written award approval letter and may begin submitting invoices for reimbursement after a fully executed task order. Project managers should aim to have projects fully implemented within two years of the award. Project timelines longer than this will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

*\*Applications requesting funds greater than \$250,000 require VHCB Board approval and may take longer to process*



## TO APPLY:

Please complete either the Project Design/Implementation or Project ID/Development Memphremagog Water Quality Restoration Formula Grant Application

In addition to answering the questions in the application, you will also need to **submit the following documents, combined in the following order, into one PDF** to [n.johns@vhcb.org](mailto:n.johns@vhcb.org) within three weeks of the next BWQC meeting date

1. Map of Project Area (orthophoto map) including extent and location of project components
2. Completed DEC [Interim Phosphorus Reduction Calculator Tool v1.0](#) **or** for Developed Land Projects, report from [DEC Stormwater Treatment Practice Calculator](#)
3. Natural Resources Screening Form: [Appendix A. Clean Water Initiative Program - Project Eligibility Screening Form](#) in the Clean Water Initiative Program [FY23 Funding Policy](#).
4. Supporting budget documentation, if available
5. Indication of landowner support/awareness of required commitment (if applicable)
6. Three or more photos of proposed project site
7. Copy of bids/quotes, if available
8. Any other relevant documents (e.g. preliminary engineering report, bid documents, etc.)

## Additional Information

For additional information, or if you have any questions, please contact

Nathanael Johns, *Clean Water Programs Manager*

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(802) 828-5555

Also, please visit the [Memphremagog Basin CWSP website](#)