



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

PROPOSALS DUE Wednesday, February 21st by 4:00 p.m.

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. The CWSP has approximately \$900,000 available for this third round to fund eligible projects with consideration by the Memphremagog BWQC in March 22nd, 2024.

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 the CWIP FY23 funding policy linked above.

- 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



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

- Identification and Assessment - compiling a list of potential projects within a watershed or municipality
- Development – scoping work to determine feasibility, constraints and overall sustainability of a project
- 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

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

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](#).

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)

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.

Key Dates

Feb. 21st- March 6th, 2024: Application review by CWSP

March 7th-March 19th, 2024: Application review by Basin Water Quality Council members

March 22nd, 2024: Application approval at Basin Water Quality Council meeting

April 4th, 2024: CWSP funding decision complete, award letter sent out*

April 19th, 2024: Project task order signed*

September 30th, 2024: All deliverables for Project ID and Development phases due

May 31st, 2025: All deliverables for Design phases due

September 1st, 2026: All deliverables for Implementation phase due

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



TO APPLY:

Please complete the fillable application form: [Memphremagog Water Quality Improvement 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 by **Wednesday, February 21st, 2024 at 4:00 pm**:

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. Detailed project budget
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 n.johns@vhcb.org

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