

**Vermont Agency of Natural Resources
Clean and Clear Program
SFY 2011 Ecosystem Restoration Grants**

Request for Pre-Proposals

As part of the Clean and Clear (C&C) Program's on-going efforts to reduce surface water pollution from phosphorus and sediment, the fiscal 2011 state budget includes capital funds to support ecosystem restoration projects. C&C is currently seeking project pre-proposals due by **October 1, 2010**. While budgets for these pre-proposals are expected to vary widely, the typical project budgets range between \$5,000 and \$50,000. Total funding currently available for Ecosystem Restoration Grants is approximately \$450,000.

C&C is specifically interested in proposals designed to improve water quality, including but not limited to projects that: improve stream stability, incorporate the science of fluvial geomorphology in river corridor management decisions, protect against flood hazards, and improve in-stream and riparian habitat; mitigate the effects of hydrologic modification (stormwater runoff) associated with urban development; protect and restore riparian wetlands; re-establish lake shoreline native vegetation and related shoreline erosion corrections; directly address in-lake (internal) phosphorus loading conditions; and enhance the environmental and economic sustainability of agricultural lands. Projects designed solely to address/control invasive species will generally not be considered.

From the proposals received, the C&C Project Review Committee will select projects for full or partial funding – in consideration of the Agency's Clean and Clear strategic planning process and consistent with the available funding. Proponents of selected projects will then be asked to develop project work plans and more detailed budgets for review and approval by the Director of the Clean and Clear Program.

Program Goals and Funding Categories

The goal of C&C Ecosystem Restoration grants is to *reduce the long-term nutrient and sediment loading from and/or increase nutrient and sediment storage in Vermont watersheds*. To achieve this goal, the C&C Program has established three broad categories for Ecosystem Restoration projects: project identification, project development, and project implementation. These are described with some additional detail below:

- 1 **Project Identification;** assessments, data analysis including sediment storage and erosion risk assessments and mapping, and preliminary stakeholder project commitments.
- 2 **Project Development;** plan development, project prioritization, analysis of opportunities and constraints associated with candidate projects, securing stakeholder commitments, design level assessments, project design, and the development of long-term landowner agreements or easements.
- 3 **Project Implementation;** accomplishes ecosystem restoration.

Who May Apply

Vermont municipalities, local or regional governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and citizens groups are eligible to receive C&C Ecosystem Restoration Grants. Individuals and state and federal agencies are not eligible to receive funds directly, but may partner with an eligible project sponsor.

Ecosystem Restoration Project Ranking and Selection Criteria

Pre-proposals are to be no more than two pages in length; therefore, a project description, which meets the following ranking and selection criteria, must be brief. Providing a map of the project location and/or illustrative photos as part of the pre-proposal is strongly encouraged, and will not count toward the two-page limit.

Projects funded by the C&C Program are **not** limited to the Lake Champlain basin, or northern portion of Lake Champlain; ANR anticipates the continued funding of a variety of projects state-wide. Proposed projects must be consistent with the program goal described above, as well as meet **all** of the initial eligibility tests provided below. Higher priority will be given to projects that receive higher scores relative to the application review criteria (below) and can be completed by September 30, 2011.

Initial Eligibility Tests for Clean and Clear Ecosystem Restoration proposals:

- The costs of design, permitting, and implementation are reasonable given the overall gains in water quality, water quantity mitigation, aquatic and riparian habitat and/or fluvial erosion hazard reduction.
- All project partners have demonstrated the level of commitment necessary to complete the project. For implementation projects, the landowner(s) is committed, and has conceptually agreed, to participate in the project.
- The necessary mechanisms for continued success and longevity of the project have been identified, steps that will be taken to minimize likelihood that the completed project will fail because of unmitigated constraints (i.e. a contributing stressor that can not be removed) and/or there is clear intention/commitment that they will be addressed and incorporated in the design and implementation of the project. These mechanisms will be somewhat specific to the type of project, but generally include:
 - ◆ For Stormwater projects :
 - Site and project design allow for ease of access and maintenance, inspection, and monitoring; a maintenance plan and responsibility for maintenance have been established.
 - ◆ For River Corridor projects:
 - Minimized likelihood that the completed project will fail due to anticipated channel adjustments in the river reach or the watershed.
 - Ability to demonstrate that the project will not lead or contribute to channel instability and increased pollutant loading from upland, upstream or downstream reaches.
 - ◆ For Wetlands and Lake Shoreland projects:
 - Contributing stressors have been identified and mitigated to the extent practicable.
 - ◆ For Roadway projects:
 - Projects have been identified through comprehensive planning, as part of the Better Backroads Program or similar.
 - ◆ For Agriculture projects:
 - Projects have exhausted other available funding mechanisms, including but not limited to programs available through the Agency of Agriculture (e.g., CREP, BMP) and/or the Natural Resources Conservation Service (e.g., EQIP, WRP).

Application review criteria used to evaluate eligible projects submitted for C&C funding. Please answer each of the following questions in narrative form; weight (points) given to each question is provided:

- How will the proposed project address or avoid a water quality problem related to excessive sediment and/or nutrient loading? (25 points)
- Has the project been identified in a TMDL implementation plan and/or river corridor, watershed, or other state or municipal-sponsored water resource plan? If so, please provide a page-specific reference. Consideration will be given to both the number of issues addressed by this project as well as the relative priority assigned to those needs within the plan(s). (10 points)
- Is this project scope part of a larger effort, such as a single project that provides river corridor protection and eliminates direct animal access to surface water? If so, briefly explain the larger effort including key partnerships. (10 points)
- Other than applying for this grant, what steps has the landowner and/or municipality taken to address the need for this project? Examples include proactively working to avoid future problems through efforts like employing site-specific best management practices, implementing shoreland and river corridor protection or conservation zoning; creating a stormwater utility. (10 points)
- Will the project provide for long-term or permanent river corridor, lakeshore, and/or wetland protection or mitigation of stormwater impacts? How will on-going maintenance or stewardship needs be addressed? (10 points)
- Will the project result in additional, tangible social and environmental benefits, such as: fish and wildlife habitat enhancement or restoration; fluvial erosion hazard reduction; protection of existing infrastructure; or serve as a highly visible public demonstration project? (5 points)
- List all source(s) and amounts of financial match to the Clean & Clear share of the project. The value of the match can consist of cash, donation, and in-kind contributions. (5 points)
- Overall quality and completeness of the application. (25 points)
 - Describing, briefly, the project, including project goals, tasks to be performed and the environmental concerns or needs that will be addressed.
 - Providing a map showing the location of the project¹.
 - Directly addressing each of the review criteria
 - Identifying specific products to be delivered, with deadlines
 - Identifying anticipated environmental outcomes expected as a direct result of project implementation
 - Identifying persons who will be involved in the project and their respective roles and/or functions. If appropriate, explain how landowner(s) have been involved.
 - Presenting a cost proposal for the work to be performed based upon personnel, overhead, other direct costs, subcontractor costs, etc..

Proposal Submission

Proposals must be clearly marked and emailed to Heather Bullett (heather.bullett@state.vt.us). The deadline for submission is 4:00 pm on Friday, October 1, 2010.

For additional information or questions regarding the pre-proposal process or to discuss potential projects, please contact Julie Moore at: 241-3687 or julie.moore@state.vt.us.

¹ It is highly recommended that stream geomorphic reach breaks (as per the Phase 1 protocol) are shown for river-related projects to ensure the accuracy of both the scope and budget of the proposed project.