



Stream and Wetland Restoration Grant Program Manual

Applications and supporting documentation must
be submitted electronically via the TDEC Online
Grants Management System at
<https://tdec.smartsimple.com/>

For more information:
<https://www.tn.gov/environment/about-tdec/grants-home.html>

STREAM AND WETLAND RESTORATION GRANT PROGRAM

The purpose of the Stream and Wetland Restoration Grant Program is to leverage improvement opportunities in selecting and funding projects that best ensure benefits to natural resources with a nexus to those injured and compensated for through enforcement. Projects funded through this program may not be used as a mechanism for fulfilling any compensatory mitigation liabilities or requirements for impacts authorized through the State's Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit and 401 Water Quality Certification programs or required to correct an unpermitted alteration. However, with appropriate documentation to ensure both obligations are separately satisfied, a compensatory mitigation project could be combined with a grant-funded project, provided that the compensatory mitigation does not count as a match. "Mitigation" means the restoration, creation, enhancement, and/or preservation of aquatic resources to compensate for unavoidable impacts as provided by Tenn. Comp. Rules and Regs. 0400-40-07-.04(7).

With more than 60,000 miles of rivers and streams and more than 500,000 acres of lakes, Tennessee's waters provide recreational enjoyment and water supply to millions of people and habitat for the most biodiverse freshwater aquatic species in the United States. In addition, they provide the irrigation needs of agriculture as well as meeting the needs of industry. Increasingly, responding to water-use demands requires collaboration and thoughtful planning among a broad partnership of agencies and interests to assure that our waters continue to fully meet the many needs placed upon them.

STREAM AND WETLAND RESTORATION GRANT PROGRAM GOALS:

- Establish and nurture partnerships that lead to the implementation of critical projects to protect and improve the state of watersheds in Tennessee;
- Work together to accelerate restoration of impaired streams and degraded wetlands;
- Encourage the exchange of information, coordination, and planning among agencies, citizens, and communities to achieve healthy watersheds;
- Encourage and assist with the application of good science to achieve comprehensive and collaborative strategies for healthy watershed planning; and
- Focus stakeholder programs and resources toward collaborative initiatives, promoting better decisions on spending available resources, and increasing the opportunity to protect and improve multiple resources and watersheds with an emphasis on increased connectivity to maximize resource services.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT AREAS:

Strategic investment areas will guide selection of projects under the request for proposal (RFP) process. Preference will be given to projects addressing more than one strategic investment area and projects that support and improve connected water resources or are part of/connected to a larger water resource improvement project. Strategic investment areas include:

Stream and Wetland Restoration and Enhancement Projects – Stream and/or wetland restoration and enhancement projects that improve the value of the resources type for plant and animal habitat and water quality. These projects should be feasible in the allotted grant period and should improve the physical, chemical, and/or biological characteristics of waters of the state of Tennessee. Resources proposed for alteration should be scientifically documented to be degraded and capable of reaching a trajectory toward an appropriate ecological community for the stream and wetland type and ecoregion. Permanent protection through easements or deed restrictions are required.

Protection of Waters and Wetlands – Land acquisition and easements to protect the highest quality stream and wetland habitat, protect state-listed threatened or endangered species that inhabit stream and wetland habitat, or protect integral hydrological inputs to stream and wetland health. These projects should be feasible in the allotted grant period, should be permanently protected through easements or deed restrictions, and should maintain at a documented high quality the physical, chemical, and/or biological characteristics of waters of the state of Tennessee.

Water Quality Improvements – Projects that improve the water quality to benefit stream and wetland water resources through chemical and/or biological means. This category refers to remediation of pollutant sources or removal of loading inputs to the watershed. Examples include correcting acid mine drainage, repairing septic tanks, better stormwater management and capping abandoned oil wells. These projects should be feasible in the allotted grant period and should be permanently protected through easements or deed restrictions.

Monitoring and Adaptive Management – This must be part of studies designed and conducted to support the target investments above and document results that may contribute to a greater knowledge of water resources or best management practices in Tennessee.

Financial Leveraging – Projects that focus existing funding and identify/develop sources of match funding for water resource protection and improvement through partnerships to support the target investments above.

GRANT PROJECT TARGETS:

Grant awards will prioritize projects that are in the closest proximity to the primary restoration HUC 12 watersheds listed in Table 1. These locations are prioritized to offset natural resource damages where the department has recovered funds for restoration and projects have not been implemented. Projects that are located within or near the secondary restoration HUC 12 watersheds listed in Table 1 may be considered if funding is available after primary restoration HUC 12 projects are considered. The list is updated yearly to reflect watersheds where restoration is needed to offset damages.

Table 1: Restoration/Enhancement and Protection Target Project Locations

Primary HUC 12	Primary HUC 12 Name
051301040103	White Oak Creek
051301040401	Laurel Fork
051301050406	Sulphur Creek-Wolf River
051301080701	Falling Water River Headwaters
051301080705	Falling Water River Middle
051302010101	Goose Creek-Dark Shrum Branch
051302010302	Cumberland River-Hogan Creek
051302020102	Mill Creek Lower
051302020308	Cumberland River-Sams Creek
051302030304	Hurricane Creek
051302040202	Murphree Creek
051302040302	South Harpeth River Lower
051302040402	Beaverdam Creek
051302040601	Little Harpeth River
051302040604	Brush Creek
051302050404	North Cross Creek-Cumberland River
060101010404	Newland Hollow-North Fork Holston River
060101020703	Reedy Creek
060102010106	Little River Middle Prong
060102070202	Beaver Creek Lower
060102070302	East Fork Poplar Creek
060102080202	Daddys Creek Headwaters
060102080301	Little Obed River
060200011202	Tennessee River-Nickajack Lake Upper
060200021202	Spring Creek
060200021301	Candies Creek Upper
060200021404	South Mouse Creek
060200021408	Hiwassee River-Coppinger Creek
060300040204	Dry Weakley Creek
060300040207	Richland Creek-Petty Branch
060300050505	Shoal Creek Upper
060300051203	Dry Creek-Pickwick Lake
060400010807	Beech River-Turkey Creek
060400020307	Duck River-Fall Creek
060400030203	Lower Rutherford Creek
060400050503	Big Sandy River-Bacon Creek
080102020205	Houser Creek
080102090403	Loosahatchie River-Weber Branch
080102090404	Clear Creek Canal
080102100305	Grays Creek-Wolf River

080102110101	Upper Nonconnah Creek
080102110102	Middle Nonconnah Creek
Secondary HUC 12	Secondary HUC 12 Name
060101080806	Lower Lick Creek
060102070102	Lower Bull Run Creek
060200011202	Upper Nickajack Lake - Tennessee River
080102030302	Spring Creek Lower
080102110103	Lower Lick Creek

Applicants must identify the resource type (i.e. stream or wetland), HUC 8 and HUC 12 watersheds of the proposed project on the pre-proposal application. Successful applications should articulate how their projects offset and prevent future loss of resources in the watershed utilizing the ranking criteria outlined in Table 5. Table 2 lists examples of possible restoration components and resources potentially benefitted.

Table 2: Examples of Possible Restoration Components and Resources Benefitted

Restoration Components	Generic Description	Resources/Resource Services Benefitted
Habitat Creation	Converting one habitat type to another.	• Surface Water • Sediments • Aquatic Invertebrates • Fish • Birds • Turtles • Amphibians • Mammals • Aquatic and semi-aquatic plants and plant communities • State and federally listed aquatic animal species and aquatic or semi-aquatic plant species
Habitat Restoration	Improving degraded habitat or returning former habitat to natural conditions.	
Habitat Enhancement	Increasing one or more of the services provided by an existing habitat.	

Land Acquisition and Easements	Preserving natural resources that contribute significantly to the ecological sustainability of the watershed and may otherwise be degraded by development.	
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FUNDING AND MATCH:

Total grant funding available for all projects selected under this RFP is up to \$400,000. The minimum project funding amount is \$20,000. The maximum project funding for a single project is \$250,000.

Projects are required to leverage additional resources to match the grant funding with a minimum of 20% of the total project cost. Higher matches will receive greater consideration for the value of grant funds requested. In-kind leverage is allowed and must be presented in the proposal budget. Demonstrating how the grantee will successfully track and document the project once the work starts must be included in the proposal. Compensatory mitigation for permitted impacts or corrective action for violations may not be counted towards the required match.

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT CONSIDERATION:

All applicants are required to submit a pre-proposal, including the grant program pre-proposal application, project description, letters of commitment, budget, and budget justification. Applicants must also submit the Title VI Compliance Application Survey in the Grants Management System.

PRE-PROPOSAL CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

The following items must be submitted as part of the pre-proposal:

1. Grant Program Pre-Proposal Application
2. Project Description:
 - **Five Page Maximum Narrative**
 - Using the Strategic Investment Area categories and Table 3: Required Elements, the applicant must provide a detailed narrative as to how the project addresses each required element. The narrative must be submitted in a format using the required elements as headings.
3. Letters of Commitment:
 - Letters of commitment are required for each partner listed. This letter should come from the lead of the organization or entity and be directed to the TDEC grant coordinator. Grant proposal partnership examples are listed in Table 4.
4. Budget/Budget Justification:
 - The current TDEC-approved budget form must be completed. Items that are not applicable should be marked with a zero. Additional budget lines may be added to the form as required to characterize the project. The applicant must provide a budget justification to describe various line-items.
5. Title VI Compliance Application Survey

- For entities who currently lack Title VI programs or any of the specific resources included in the survey, resources are available for subrecipient customization at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/opsp-policy-and-sustainable-practices/opsp-title-vi-and-environmental-justice.html>.

Table 3: Required Elements

Required Elements
<i>The following required elements apply to all pre-proposals. All criteria must be met to receive a full review.</i>
Strategic Investment Area. Provide a brief explanation of how the project fits into at least one of the Strategic Investment Areas.
Above and Beyond Compliance. Provide a brief explanation of how the project is a proactive measure to improve and protect water resources. The project is not intended to help stakeholders meet regulatory requirements.
Leverages Additional Resources. Provide a brief explanation of additional agencies or organizations providing time and/or financial contributions to plan and implement the project at a minimum of 20% of the total project cost. This may include volunteer labor, materials, equipment, and other items approved by TDEC. (Higher matches receive greater consideration.)
Project Completion. Provide a brief explanation of the project timeline. All TDEC-funded aspects of the project must be complete and all final invoices submitted in accordance with the grant contract. The maximum term for a grant contract is 5 years.
Project Location, Type, and Constraints. Explain how the project is located within the State of Tennessee in proximity to the watershed(s) targeted in the RFP and addresses at least one targeted resource type. Provide the HUC watershed(s), resource type(s), and latitude and longitude of the project location(s). Describe any site constraints that may prevent generation of ecological lift or scope completion (e.g., access to only one side of a stream or powerline restrictions).
Project Management Capacity. Provide a brief explanation of how the Project Manager has, and will continue to have, capacity to complete the project and perform adaptive management and monitoring to ensure project success. Provide examples of documented success for techniques or examples of successful similar implementation.
Ability to Administer Funds. Provide a brief explanation of how the applicant will have the capacity to administer the funds awarded.

Table 4: Grant Proposal Partnership Examples

Lead Grant Applicant	Match and/or Expert Partner
Nonprofit/County/Municipality	Nonprofit/County/Municipality
Nonprofit/County/Municipality	Federal Agency
Nonprofit/County/Municipality	State Agency
Nonprofit/County/Municipality	Consulting Firm
Nonprofit/County/Municipality	Private Landowner

SELECTION OF PRE-PROPOSALS TO SUBMIT FULL PROPOSALS:

A limited number of pre-proposal applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal to elaborate on their work for a second-stage review. Requirements for the full proposal are outlined below.

FULL PROPOSAL CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

The following items must be submitted as part of the full proposal:

1. **Project Summary:**
The project summary must detail project plans, methods, goals and objectives and address the items in Table 5: Ranking Criteria. The summary must be submitted in a format using the ranking criteria as headings.
2. **Project Schedule and Project Team:**
The project schedule (timeline) and project team must be described for each area of responsibility for the project. The project schedule must include necessary permits.
 - The project schedule must include milestones and deliverables of the project.
 - Provide relevant experience with applicable restoration project implementation.
3. **Appendices:**
 - Please only include necessary materials (letters of commitment and other supporting documents).
 - Letters of support must be submitted by the deadline. Letters of support are required for any state or municipal project. The letter should come from the chief elected or appointed official (e.g., mayor), giving assurance the community is committed to completing and maintaining the project.

Table 5: Ranking Criteria

Ranking Criteria <i>The following elements will be used to score proposals.</i>	Possible Points
Project Benefits Multiple Resource Types or Benefits a Single Resource Type in Multiple Ways.	25

Collaborative Effort. Proposed project aligns with the program goals and resources of local, state and/or federal agencies and is implemented in collaboration with partners	20
Leverages Additional Resources. In-kind and/or financial contributions to plan and implement the project at a minimum match of 20% of the total project cost; leverage of 20% to 40% (10 points); over 40% (20 points)	20
Habitat Benefit Connectivity. Larger, more connected parcels provide greater resource services than smaller, disconnected parcels: a) Size of project area's habitat improvements; and b) Proximity to other parcels or opportunities providing similar resource services	10
Estimate of Benefits to Natural Resources. Provides estimated, measurable benefits to natural resources that can be reported in a quantifiable way (e.g., number of river miles protected or enhanced, acres of wetlands protected or enhanced, reductions in sediment or nutrient loading, state-listed threatened or endangered aquatic or semi-aquatic species habitat protection, etc.)	25
Technical Feasibility and Demonstration of Post-Project Implementation of Monitoring and Adaptive Management. Applicants must include an explanation of whether the project will involve costs to maintain the project after completion and, if so, how the applicant will cover those costs beyond the term of the grant contract. a) Provide support for technical feasibility (e.g., documented success of a technique or example of successful similar implementation); b) Probability of project implementation success (property owner permission letter required and discussion of the likelihood that implementing the project would produce the desired results); c) Potential obstacles to project implementation success; d) Strength of permanent site protection instrument (i.e., mineral rights, any variances or exceptions, easement, deed restriction, etc.); and e) Monitoring and adaptive management plan	25
Multiple Strategic Investment Areas. Project goals align with at least one other strategic investment area (5 points each additional strategic investment area, maximum 10 points)	10
Professional Meeting Outreach. Project specifically plans for engaging in one appropriate professional meeting to present project results as a deliverable	5
Efficiency. Maximizes TDEC funds used for results and minimizes administrative	10

overhead (10 points for no overhead, 5 points $\leq$ 5% of total funding for overhead)	
Total Possible Points	150

REVIEW PROCESS AND PROJECT FUNDING PROCESS:

The grant proposal review committee comprised of representatives from TDEC will review and recommend proposals for funding based on the ranking criteria in Table 5 of this manual. TDEC reserves the right to fund all or none of the proposals received and to fund partial projects. After projects are selected, TDEC will execute grant contracts with project recipients as funds allow.

Title VI Requirements: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance (42 U.S.C. §2000d). As a recipient of federal funding, TDEC is required to comply with the rules, laws and regulations of Title VI. Title VI also applies to recipients of federal financial assistance that passes through TDEC in the form of grants, contracts, or subcontracts, as well as federal financial assistance that passes through another state agency to TDEC. To comply with Title VI requirements for TDEC subrecipients, the Grantee must complete the TDEC Subrecipient Title VI training (accessible at <https://tdec.tn.gov/title6/index.html>) and must provide TDEC with a copy of the certificate of training completion no later than 30 days after the draft Grant Contract has been submitted to TDEC Contracts for approval (the Grantee will be notified when this has occurred). The Grantee must also complete and submit to TDEC a completed Title VI Training Certification no later than 30 days after the draft Grant Contract has been submitted to TDEC Contracts for approval.

Announcement: The TDEC grant coordinator will announce awards by emailing and calling applicants. Announcements will also be available on the TDEC website.

Funding Process: The Stream and Wetland Restoration Grant Program is a reimbursement program. Selected grant recipients will be reimbursed for up to 100 percent of approved project costs upon submission of documentation/receipts for expenses incurred and payment of expenses. Invoices will be allowed no more often than monthly. Grantees are required to track and report leverage contributions (cash or in-kind) at the proposed match percentage of the total grant funds requested as specified in their grant contract.

Start Dates for Projects: Grantees should anticipate a 3-month administrative period after grants are awarded for grant contracts to be in place.

Expectations for Awarded Projects:

Conditional aspects of the grant award include communicating with the TDEC grant coordinator, submitting a project schedule with milestones and providing quarterly progress reports, monitoring baseline environmental conditions and project success, project outreach and communication updates, tracking and reporting in-kind contributions, submitting a final report, and co-planning a dedication ceremony (if applicable). These expectations will be outlined in the grant contract.

Permits:

Projects may require coverage under Tennessee's general NPDES permit for discharges of storm water associated with construction activities (CGP) if the amount of land disturbed is one acre or more. Additionally, TDEC aquatic resource alteration permit coverage and federal Clean Water Act permit coverage through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be required where necessary prior to altering state and federal jurisdictional waters. The grantee is responsible for identifying and obtaining all necessary permits required for their project, including those listed in this paragraph and any permits applicable under other regulatory programs/authority.

All permit coverage must be in place before any construction begins. Appropriate erosion prevention and sediment control measures should be installed and maintained for the duration of the project in order to protect all nearby water resources.

Permit application and annual maintenance fees are reimbursable by grant or in-kind match funding if the costs are included in the budget line items of the grant contract.

PREPARATION AND SUBMITTAL GUIDELINES:**Eligibility:**

Grant funding is available to nonprofit corporations, state agencies, federal agencies, and local governments who meet submittal guidelines.*

*By signing the application, the applicant certifies that he/she, along with any other officers, directors, owners, partners, employees, or agents, is (are) not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible for an award by any State or Federal agency. This is in accordance with Federal Acquisition Regulation 52.209-5.

Submittal Format and Timing:

Pre-proposal applications and supporting documentation must be submitted electronically via the TDEC Online Grants Management System at <https://tdec.smartsimple.com/> no later than **4:00 p.m. EST on September 30, 2026**.

Project Permanent Protection Draft Documents:

See federal and state land protection templates under *Reference Documents (Land Protection Templates)* here: <https://www.tn.gov/environment/permit-permits/water-permits1/aquatic-resource-alteration-permit--arap-/permit-water-arap-compensatory-mitigation.html>

ATTACHMENT – GRANT BUDGET

GRANT BUDGET				
Additional Identification Information As Necessary				
The grant budget line-item amounts below shall be applicable only to expense incurred during the following Applicable Period				
		BEGIN: DATE		END: DATE
	EXPENSE OBJECT LINE-ITEM CATEGORY ¹	GRANT CONTRACT	GRANTEE ³ MATCH	TOTAL PROJECT
	Salaries, Benefits & Taxes	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Professional Fee, Grant & Award ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Supplies, Telephone, Postage & Shipping, Occupancy, Equipment Rental & Maintenance, Printing & Publications	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Travel, Conferences & Meetings	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Interest ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Insurance	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Specific Assistance To Individuals	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Depreciation ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Other Non-Personnel ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Capital Purchase ²	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Indirect Cost	0.00	0.00	0.00
	In-Kind Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Grantee Match Requirement (for any amount of the required Grantee Match that is not specifically delineated by budget line-items above) ³	0.00	0.00	0.00
	GRAND TOTAL	0.00	0.00	0.00

¹ Each expense object line-item is defined by the U.S. OMB's *Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Subpart E Cost Principles* (posted on the Internet at: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>) and CPO Policy 2013-007 (posted online at <https://www.tn.gov/generalservices/procurement/central-procurement-office--cpo-/library-.html>).

² Applicable detail follows this page if line-item is funded.

³ A Grantee Match Requirement is detailed by this Grant Budget, and the maximum total amount reimbursable by the State pursuant to this Grant Contract, as detailed by the "Grant Contract" column above, shall be reduced by the amount of any Grantee failure to meet the Match Requirement.

ATTACHMENT – GRANT BUDGET

GRANT BUDGET LINE-ITEM DETAIL:

PROFESSIONAL FEE, GRANT & AWARD	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

INTEREST	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

DEPRECIATION	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

OTHER NON-PERSONNEL	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
TOTAL	Amount

CAPITAL PURCHASE	AMOUNT
Specific, Descriptive, Detail (Repeat Row As Necessary)	Amount
TOTAL	Amount