



Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS – CLEAN WATER PROJECTS

Proposals Due: 15 March 2024

0. Introduction

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission, in its role as the Clean Water Service Provider for the Winooski Basin is accepting applications to fund non-regulatory, phosphorous reduction projects in the Winooski River Basin. Projects must align 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 to implement the Act. The Winooski Basin Clean Water Service Provider has approximately \$1,600,000 available to fund water quality improvement projects. In this project solicitation round, \$750,000 will be made available to fund design- and implementation-phase projects, and \$50,000 to fund project identification and development activities. A subsequent call for proposals will be issued in March 2024, pending the availability of funds.

1. Eligible Entities

The Clean Water Service Provider is authorized to provide 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. If such projects are selected, the determination of how such services are contracted will be made by the Clean Water Service Provider. Ineligible entities include individuals; private, for-profit businesses and industries; private, for-profit colleges and universities; and Federal agencies.

2. Eligible Project Types & Project Phases

Projects must not be required by a permit (10 VSA, 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 a project that exceeds the requirements set forth in the statutes above. Project eligibility shall be determined by the [FY23 Clean Water Initiative Program Funding Policy](#). Applicants are encouraged to complete the Project Eligibility Screening Form (see [FY23 Clean Water Initiative Program Funding Policy –](#)

[Appendix A](#)) prior to developing a project proposal to ensure alignment with the applicable eligibility criteria. Projects whose cost-effectiveness value¹ exceeds \$30,000 / kg / yr will not be considered in this solicitation round. For assistance with computing project cost-effectiveness, please contact Brian Voigt (voigt@cvregion.com).

a. Eligible Project Types

Eligible project types include the following:

- restoration/reconnection & protection of floodplain, river corridor and/or wetlands,
- forestland and forest road best management practices,
- riparian and lakeshore corridor protection, stabilization/restoration and tree plantings,
- natural woody buffers associated with riparian, lakeshore, and wetland protection and restoration,
- conservation easements (e.g. river corridor, wetland buffer),
- sub-jurisdictional practices related to developed lands,
- traditional stormwater treatment and road project BMPs may also be applicable if reducing phosphorus beyond 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 so long as the farm in question does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for the Required Agricultural Practices, and
- natural resource restoration projects on a jurisdictional farm if confirmed by the VT Agency of Agriculture.

For additional details regarding eligible project types, see [Appendix B](#) and [Appendix C](#) of the [FY23 Clean Water Initiative Program Funding Policy](#).

b. Eligible Project Phases

Eligible project phases include the following:

- Assessment / Identification: sector-specific and multi-sector assessments that follow established protocols to identify areas with the highest contributions of pollutants and result in a list of potential clean water projects to pursue.

¹ Cost-effectiveness (\$ / kg / yr) = ((15 years / project design life) * (Total Cost)) / (Phosphorous Reduction (kg / yr))

- Development: scoping work on an identified project to determine feasibility, constraints and overall suitability for implementing the project which lead to the development of a clear plan for advancing the project.
- Preliminary (30%) & Final (100%) Design: perform the work needed to ready a developed project for implementation by engaging stakeholders and addressing feasibility concerns.
- Implementation/Construction: mobilize the effort to install a clean water project.

For additional details regarding eligible project phases, see the [FY23 Clean Water Initiative Program Funding Policy – Appendix D](#).

3. How to Apply

Questions regarding this Call for Proposals must be submitted by 4:00 PM 1 March 2024, via email to Brian Voigt (voigt@cvregion.com) with the Subject line “Winooski Basin Clean Water Service Provider FY24, Project Solicitation Round 3 Question”. A list of questions and their answers will be maintained on the [Winooski Basin Clean Water Service Provider webpage](#). If an applicant would like to engage the Clean Water Service Provider regarding the score of the project they intend to propose, email Brian Voigt (voigt@cvregion.com) for assistance. The Clean Water Service Provider will derive a preliminary proposal score using information from the project proponent prior to the completion of a full project proposal.

Proposals received after the submission deadline will be considered in the next project solicitation round (issued in March 2024).

0. If your organization or municipality has not yet been pre-qualified as an eligible Winooski Basin Clean Water Service Provider Clean Water Partner, complete and submit a [pre-qualification form](#) along with your funding proposal.
1. Complete the [Water Quality Formula Grant Project Proposal Form](#). The form is provided as a fillable PDF.
2. Submit the information below in the order listed (please):
 - a) [Natural Resources Screening Form](#): see the [FY23 Clean Water Initiative Program Funding Policy – Appendix A](#). *Required for preliminary design, final design, and implementation phase projects.*
 - b) Project Locator Map – applicants may use the [Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Atlas](#) to generate the Project Locator Map. (Contact Brian Voigt (voigt@cvregion.com) for assistance.)
 - c) Project Timeline – Propose a project schedule based on the milestones of the proposed project type. Assume a 1 November

- 2023 start date. See the [FY23 Clean Water Initiative Program – Appendix B](#) for more details on project types and milestones.
- d) Staff capacity – list key staff and their role(s) in the project. Attach one-page resumes for any staff listed in Section 4 of the Application Form **who were not** included in your pre-qualification materials.
 - e) Completed [DEC Interim Phosphorus Reduction Calculator Tool v1.0](#), or, for Developed Land Projects, report from [DEC Stormwater Treatment Practice Calculator](#). (Contact Brian Voigt (voigt@cvregion.com) for assistance.)
 - f) Project Budget – Provide a detailed budget with a cost breakdown of all project and administrative expenses. The budget should be itemized by Task with anticipated costs for personnel, equipment, materials, subcontracted services and other costs as appropriate. Be sure to request sufficient funding to complete the required milestones and deliverables (including project reporting) for the type of project being proposed. See the [FY23 Clean Water Initiative Program – Appendix B](#) for more details on project types and milestones.
 - g) Letter(s) of support from landowner(s) indicating their support for and awareness of the commitment required to advance / implement the project.
 - h) Signed Operations & Maintenance Agreement (if applicable).
 - i) Permits – Attach approved project permits (if applicable).
 - j) Historic Site Review - Use the [spreadsheet](#) and accompanying guidance in the State Historic Preservation Review section of the [FY23 Clean Water Initiative Program Funding Policy](#) to determine whether your clean water project will require Preliminary and Final Project Review by the Vermont Division of Historic Preservation. Attach a copy of the completed Vermont Historic Preservation Project Review Form.

Assemble the proposal materials into a single PDF and submit to Brian Voigt (voigt@cvregion.com) via email with the following Subject line “Winooski Basin Clean Water Service Provider Project Proposal – FY24, Round 3”. Proposals sent via fax or mail will not be considered.

4. Proposal Evaluation

The Clean Water Service Provider will score the proposals and make a funding recommendation to the Winooski Basin Water Quality Council.

Design- and Implementation-phase project proposals will be scored using the following rubric:

- 1) Phosphorus Reduction Efficiency (75 points): ratio of proposed cost to overall p-reduction. P-reduction estimates for Developed Land

projects will be derived using the [DEC Stormwater Treatment Practice Calculator](#). P-reduction estimates for projects from other sectors will be derived using the [DEC Interim Phosphorus Reduction Calculator Tool v1.0](#). Estimated project cost will be provided by the applicant.

- 2) Project Risk (10 points): considers landowner relations, organizational capacity, status of Operations & Maintenance agreement, permit requirements
- 3) Design Life (5 points): points awarded to projects with a design life in excess of 15 years
- 4) Co-benefits (10 points):
 - Environmental Justice: points are awarded when a project is located in a Census Block Group where one or more Environmental Justice Focus Population demographic conditions exist
 - Ecological Benefits: points are awarded when a project reduces sediment and / or non-P nutrient loads to stressed, altered, impaired or priority waterways to which it is hydrologically connected
 - Ecosystem Services: points are awarded when a project moderates natural phenomena through carbon sequestration and flood resilience
 - Community Building: points are awarded when a project involves the community in data collection and decision-making, enhances the working landscape and provides recreational benefits
 - Education: points are awarded when a project includes aspects of public outreach designed to educate community members about the importance of phosphorus reduction and watershed health

For a more detailed description of the Design- and Implementation-phase project proposal review process, please refer to the [Co-benefits scoring methodology](#) as well as the March 2023 Clean Water Service Provider [presentation](#) to the Winooski Basin Water Quality Council and the [minutes](#) from that meeting.

Assessment / Identification and Development-phase projects will be rated according to their likelihood of success in identifying cost-efficient, non-regulatory water quality improvement projects in the Winooski Basin.

5. Award Process

The Winooski Basin Water Quality Council will conduct an initial review of projects at their 21 March 2024 meeting and rank and prioritize proposals for funding at their 18 April 2024 meeting. Project proponents are

encouraged to attend the 21 March 2024 meeting to answer questions about their proposals. Once the Clean Water Service Provider confirms the project's eligibility, one of the following two courses of action will be pursued:

- a) For projects proposed by a pre-qualified Clean Water Partner, the Clean Water Service Provider will determine if the entity has the experience and staffing capacity to manage the project. If so, the Clean Water Service Provider will develop a subgrant or contract with the sponsoring entity, depending on the nature of the work.
- b) For projects lacking an eligible sponsor, or if the sponsor does not have the capacity to manage the project, the Clean Water Service Provider will manage the project or subcontract another entity to do so following the Clean Water Service Provider's procurement process.

6. Disclaimer

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission assumes neither responsibility nor liability for costs incurred relevant to the preparation and submission of the proposal or any other costs prior to issuance of a contract. The expense of preparing, submitting, and presenting a proposal is the sole responsibility of the applicant. Once submitted, the proposal becomes the property of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission. Information received in response to this Call for Proposals that is marked Proprietary will be handled accordingly.

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission reserves the right to: 1) examine all aspects of responses submitted, tangible and intangible; 2) seek clarification of submitted materials, conduct interviews with contractors, and select a contractor that is best able to provide the requested services and promote the public interest; 3) withdraw this Call for Proposals, and/or to advertise for new submissions at any time if it is in the best interest of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to do so; and 4) reject any and all proposals received, to interview or not interview any or all respondents to this Call for Proposals prior to selection, to negotiate with any qualified source, or to cancel in part or in its entirety this Call for Proposals if it determines such action to be in the best interest of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission or that of eligible parties. Reasons for cancellation or rejection will be provided to all registered vendors in writing. This solicitation in no way obligates the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission to award funds. Funds will be awarded as deemed to be in the best interest of the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission in its role as the Clean Water Service Provider for the Winooski Basin.