



WUV Enhancement Project Development Block Grant Webinar

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Watersheds United Vermont (WUV)

Watersheds United Vermont (WUV) is an association of community-based watershed groups across Vermont with a mission to empower watershed groups to protect and restore Vermont's waters.

WUV currently administers 5 subgrant programs through Department of Environmental Conservation Block Grants. These subgrant funds are to support eligible entities in non regulatory clean water restoration efforts.:

- **Enhancement Project Development Block Grant (EPDG)**
- Enhancement Design and Implementation Block Grant (EDIBG)
- Enhancement Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant (E Dam Removal DIBG)
- Enhancement Riparian Buffer Grant (ERBG)
- Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development (CW/WCD) Block Grant



Ongoing WUV DEC Enhancement Development Design and Implementation Block Grant (EDDIBG)

Total Project Completion Award (since 2022): \$3,500,000

Obligated to Date: ~\$3,000,000

DEC/WUV Parent Grant End Date: March 2029

Projects Awarded: 34 EDIBG Total (4 Preliminary Design, 6 Final Design, 24 Implementation); **13 Project Development awards**

EPDG is part of the larger EDDIBG (Enhancement Development Design and Implementation Block Grant) that includes EDIBG- **WUV has separated project development out to be its own grant round.**



Enhancement Project Development Block Grant Overview

The Enhancement Project Development Block Grant (EPDG) will support the project development of priority water quality enhancement projects from **July 2026 through June 2028**.

WUV seeks proposals for the development of new enhancement projects and for the development efforts needed between the design and implementation phases of enhancement projects.

All grant information can be found on WUV's Grants Webpage:

<https://watershedsunitedvt.org/grants/enhancement-project-development>

[Application](#)

[Grant Guidelines](#)



Available Funds

Spring 2026 Grant Round:

EPDG Available Funds: ~\$400,000

Each organization can apply for up to a maximum of \$40,000 for Project Development work.

Future rounds are unlikely through this current parent grant.



Key Dates

March 24, 2026: WUV Enhancement Project Development Grant (EPDG) - Request for Proposals released

May 4, 2026: Enhancement Project Development Application due

Late May: Funding Decisions announced

June 30, 2028: All projects funded through this grant round must be complete with final invoicing and deliverables submitted by June 30, 2028 or no more than 3-months after the completion of the project development work (whichever one occurs sooner).



Eligible Project Types

For a project to be eligible for the EPDG, it must fall into one of the following project types:

- Lake Shoreland
- Floodplain/Stream Restoration (including culvert projects)
- Forestry***
- Wetlands
- Stormwater
- Roads Project***
- Roads/Stormwater Gully***
- Agricultural Pollution Prevention
- **Riparian Buffer Planting**
- **Dam Removal**
- **River Corridor and Wetland Easement (RCWE)*****

***new guidance on these project types coming in next CWIP funding policy release, if you plan to apply to this project type, reach out to WUV and we can try to ensure that project aligns with upcoming guidance



Project Type Tables and Practice Types

[Enhancement Project Development Project Types Table](#)

[2026 WUV Enhancement Project Types Table](#)

[2026 WUV Enhancement Practice Types Table](#)



Project Development Definition

Scoping work on any non-regulatory project type to determine feasibility, constraints, and overall suitability for implementing the project. This typically includes reviewing site assessments or other project identification tools and prioritized plans, conducting site visits, refining project scope and phasing, developing conceptual maps and drawings, estimating pollutant reduction benefits, confirming landowner/municipal interest, identification of – and possible engagement with – other stakeholders, partners, and likely concerned parties (e.g. neighbors, funders, regulators), identifying the prospective responsible operations and maintenance party, consulting with DEC staff, and determining project budget and permit needs (local, state and federal), natural and cultural resource constraints, co-benefits, and other project considerations, site constraints and feasibility factors (e.g. rights-of-way, infrastructure, invasive species presence, hazardous materials concerns) in advance of design or between design phases.

Performance Measure: Number of projects explored for design and/or implementation



Project Eligibility

Project purpose must address at least one of the four objectives of Vermont's Surface Water Management Strategy:

- (1) Minimize Anthropogenic Nutrient and Organic Pollution***
- (2) Protect and Restore Aquatic and Riparian Habitats***
- (3) Minimize Flood and Fluvial Erosion Hazards***
- (4) Minimize Toxic and Pathogenic Pollution and Chemicals of Emerging Concern***



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Project Eligibility

Project must be non-regulatory: To be eligible for EPDG and eventually EDIBG funds, projects cannot be driven by a regulatory requirement. Regulatory projects are those required/compelled by water quality-related regulatory programs.



Project Eligibility

Projects must meet at least one of the statutorily-defined purposes for Enhancement Grants:

There are 5 statutorily defined purposes for the Enhancement grant program:

- a. Protect high quality waters,
- b. Maintain or improve water quality,
- c. Restore degraded or stressed waters,
- d. Create resilient watersheds and communities, or
- e. Support the public's use and enjoyment of the State's waters

For a project to be eligible, it must meet at least one of the above purposes.

See definitions for each one of these categories on page 4 of the grant guidelines!

Eligible Entities

Vermont municipalities
Regional planning commissions
Natural resource conservation districts
Non-profit organizations
State agencies
State colleges and universities
Public hospitals and medical centers
Public schools

Ineligible Entities

Private citizens, individuals
Private for-profit businesses and industries
Private for-profit colleges and universities
Federal agencies



Project Development Parent WPD-ID

Projects must have a Project Development Parent Watershed Projects Database identification number (WPD-ID) to be eligible for funding. To request a Project Development WPD-ID, you must use the New Project Form (N-Form). [Clean Water Project - New Project Form in ANR Online.](#)

This is different than an individual project WPD-ID, it is a high-level ID that covers the full suite of work you plan to do!

For current subgrantees with an open Enhancement Project Development Grants Only: If you have a pre-existing Project Development WPD-ID, you must contact your basin planner to see if the new scope of work should be added to this existing Project Development WPD-ID or if a new WPD-ID should be assigned.



Project Development - General Project Scoping

The general project scoping portion of project development aims to identify projects for development. This is intended to be for a relatively small portion of project development activities. General project scoping activities are those that, initially, cannot be linked to a specific project or suite of projects but provide the subgrantees with a list of specific projects to develop. A workplan can't just include general project scoping activities, it must also include next steps to advance scoping work to specific project development work.



Examples - General Project Scoping

1. Review the Watershed Projects Database or existing plans and prioritization document (such as Stormwater Master Plans (SWMP), Flow Restoration Plans, Phosphorus Control Plans, Lake Wise Assessments, River Corridor Plans, Tactical Basin Plans, and the Watershed Projects Database) to find projects to develop.
2. Discuss potential projects with Tactical Basin Planners to gauge priority.
3. Respond as needed to landowner water quality questions and concerns and conduct landowner site visits to develop strategies for river restoration and protection opportunities that may turn into a project for development.
4. Follow up regularly with potential project landowners to gauge interest.
5. Educate and communicate with new municipal staff or town committee members on existing River Corridor or Stormwater Master Plans to gauge interest in selecting and pursuing top priority projects



Project Development - Specific Project Development

Specific Project Development activities are activities that provide the subgrantee with the information and commitments needed to bring a project successfully into design or implementation. Specific project development activities include the research and communications necessary to advance a specifically identified project. Most project development work occurs prior to 30% design, however, some projects may already have 30% or 100% designs and may need some further development activities to move the project forward. Specific Project Development activities are the activities that are most often associated with project development.



Examples - Specific Project Development

1. Work with DEC staff to refine project scope to ensure proposed project is the preferred cost effective project/best management practice (BMP) solution for a given water quality concern.
2. Identify and contact the appropriate landowner and secure landowner support.
3. Identify and contact the operation and maintenance (O&M) responsible party and secure their support.
4. Work with partners or available online tools to estimate potential water quality pollution benefits and project costs (if not already identified in prior-funded design/scoping work).
5. Review potential natural resource concerns and permit needs for the project.
6. Contact any other relevant stakeholders to review potential project barriers.
7. Meet with town staff and selectboard (if a municipal project) to encourage implementation of specific high priority projects from a sector-based assessment and discuss potential grant funding.
8. Develop project concept drawings, memos, or preliminary designs for the purpose of determining project feasibility and communicating with stakeholders and landowners to secure support. Concept drawing and designs cannot meet the threshold of a 30% design.




Project Development - Ineligible Activities

Project Development is not assessment and planning work. Ineligible activities include performing Lake Wise assessments, road erosion inventories, Stream Geomorphic Assessments, or developing prioritized plans like Stormwater Master Plans, Lake Watershed Action Plans, and River Corridor Plans. These activities are supported under separate CWIP spending initiatives.

Project Development is not design work, nor is it the work supporting the design or implementation phase of a project. Project Completion tasks for design and implementation phases are supported under separate CWIP spending initiatives.

Project Development funds may support tasks between design phases but not within or during a design phase. Some limited concept drawings or designs are allowable if they are needed to determine project viability or secure landowner support, but work cannot result in completion of 30%+ designs.



Project Development is not any activity otherwise supported through Tactical Basin Planning contracts to statutory partners pursuant to 10 V.S.A. § 1253(d)(3). If you have questions on the difference between your Tactical Basin Plan and Project Development funding, please contact WUV directly.

Project Development is not grant writing. Subgrantees may use funds to gather all the necessary information that might be requested on a funding application but may not charge their time to this grant for writing any applications.

Project Development is not general, untargeted outreach and education.

Project development work is not allowed on projects that do not meet the goals and definition of the Enhancement Grant Program.

Project Development funding cannot be used for any project requiring a 3-acre permit or any other project obligated under the law.



Project Development Work Plan

EPDG Application

- Combine scoping and specific Project Development to create a cohesive plan for each project type (Scope 30 projects in a sub-watershed, identify 10 priority sites/landowner, develop 3 projects ready for design)
- For predictive work focus on process and target areas as opposed to specific project details
- Provide project specific details for feasibility studies and if doing PD between design/implementation phases
- Create a work plan that can support a board variety of work through 2028
- Despite predictive nature, show need for projects!



Example Work Plan

As an example, an application could request funds for development of:

- 2 specific known dam removal projects that already have WPD-IDs;
- a general scoping plan to review a river corridor plan with the goal of identifying 10 priority projects and from those 10 projects developing 2 projects for design under the river restoration project type;
- feasibility study for a culvert replacement;
- riparian buffer development funds to respond to landowner's interested in plantings

All these requests can be applied for in 1 application.



Project Development Deliverables

[Project Development Findings Report](#)

Deliverables
<p>Batch Import File or ANR Online Clean Water Project - New Project Form (once available) for any projects absent from the Watershed Projects Database.</p> <p>Project Development findings submitted to DEC in format requested</p>



Budget Table

Each budget line item should represent the total amount of funding to cover all work requested across multiple project types.

The project budget does not need to be divided up into different project type categories.

In the budget narrative section, we ask that applicants give a rough breakdown of anticipated expenses in each project type that you are applying for EPDG funds.

There is flexibility to move funds across project types. Subgrantees will need to let WUV know if the actual expenditures vary significantly from the projected budgets.



Formula Funds vs Enhancement Funds

If the proposed project located in a watershed with access to Water Quality Restoration Formula Grants (Champlain and Memphremagog Basins) you will need to determine which funding source is the best fit for your project.

WUV's application will ask to identify why your project/predicted projects will fit best in the WUV EPDG as opposed to the Water Quality Restoration Formula Grant program. Below are multiple possible reasons as to why a project might best fit WUV's enhancement funding:

- 1) Not a phosphorus based project
- 2) Predicted above funding threshold for CWSP funding
- 3) Project driven reason (landowner preference, grant round timing, etc)



Other Project Development Opportunities

DEC has awarded the Enhancement Grant funds to 3 entities:

1. WUV
2. Natural Resources Conservation Council (NRCC)
3. Mount Ascutney Regional Commission (MARC).

The funding requirements are the same for all entities, though the application and grant administration process may vary somewhat (not all FPAs separate EPDG from EDIBG). While we encourage for administration purposes that if the timing works out NRCDs apply to NRCC, watershed groups apply to WUV and municipalities apply through MARC.



Other Funding Considerations

Funds are state dollars from the Vermont Clean Water Fund and **can** be used as match/leverage for other funding sources.

Grant is Performance Based with Cost Reimbursable Terms.

Reimbursement should take less time than in the past.

10% of the project cost will be held until the final deliverables are complete.

All Deliverables and Invoicing must be completed by the end of the subgrant award or no more than 3 months after the end of the project (whichever comes sooner).



Completing the Application

Please complete and submit the application as a single Word or PDF file

Email the application to:

WUV Director Lyn Munno at lyn@watershedsunitedvt.org

WUV Grant Manager Christian Pelletier at Christian@watershedsunitedvt.org

Please use the email heading “EPDG Grant Application: Applicant Acronym, Project Name/Abbreviation”



Questions!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to ask questions. We are happy to help navigate any issues throughout the application process! Please reach out to WUV if you would like to set up a meeting to discuss a potential project!