

2025

WUV Riparian Planting Funding Opportunities



The WUV Team

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WUV Riparian Funding Overview

- ◆ *Applications due October 30, 2024 for Spring 2025 plantings*
- ◆ Applications can be found at:
<https://watershedsunitedvt.org/resources/block-grants>
- ◆ Available funds:
 1. ~\$150,000 to subgrant for DEC WBBG plantings.
 2. ~\$30,000 to subgrant to NFWF riparian buffer planting projects
 3. ~6,000 stems to subgrant (~\$36,000) for PUR Projet plantings

2025 Riparian Planting Application Changes

- ◆ One application to cover all three of WUV's planting funding sources (DEC, PUR, NFWF)
- ◆ Provide all costs and activities you would like to see funded in ONE application.
- ◆ Opt out of funding source (DEC, PUR, NFWF) on application if one of these sources will not work for you
- ◆ If you do not opt out of a funding source, WUV will match funding source to costs and activities to try to create funds that will cover all costs and activities.
- ◆ Flexibility to use multiple funding sources (not opting out) will allow most comprehensive funding package.
- ◆ Highly encouraging groups to provide full request for activities they would like to do at planting sites (maintenance, monitoring, site prep, etc.)
- ◆ Managing multiple grant funds may require extra reporting/project management, please try to account for this. Final award amounts can be adjusted once funding structure is determined.

2025 WUV's DEC Woody Buffer Funding

- ◆ Available plantings funds (Spring 2025): ~**\$150,000**
- ◆ No limit to number of plantings or size of plantings that groups can apply for. *Each planting site requires its own application*
- ◆ Funding is cost reimbursable, but can be billed at multiple points throughout grant cycle
- ◆ The primary purpose of the planting must be to establish wooded riparian buffers Projects that best align with the statutory intent and goals of the Water Quality Enhancement program:
 1. Protect high quality waters,
 2. Maintain or improve water quality,
 3. Restore degraded or stressed waters,
 4. Create resilient watersheds and communities, or
 5. Support the public's use and enjoyment of the State's waters
- ◆ Performance Measures:
 - Acres of riparian buffer planted
 - Linear feet of riparian buffer planted

DEC Woody Buffer Planting Requirements

- ◆ Minimum 35-foot buffer
- ◆ At least 300 stems per acre
- ◆ Native woody species appropriate to site location
- ◆ Site location or strategy identified in Tactical Basin Plan or River Corridor Plan
- ◆ Planting Plan and DEC 10-Year O&M Agreement
- ◆ Match appreciated but not required (volunteer hours can be used as match)

DEC Woody Buffer Planting Recommendations

- ◆ Stock from Vermont grown nurseries
- ◆ 3 to 5 foot trees (both this and the above recommendation have been shown to lead to lower mortality)
- ◆ Wider buffers (50 feet) where appropriate and possible
- ◆ More stems per acre (400)

DEC Woody Buffer Site Eligibility

- ◆ Site location or strategy identified in Tactical Basin Plan or River Corridor Plan
- ◆ Must have a Watershed Project Database ID that is specific to the planting site - and approval from basin planner and river scientist
- ◆ Planting sites must be high- priority, cost-effective and utilize native vegetation
- ◆ All plantings must meet eligibility criteria outlined in the [Vermont Clean Water Initiative Program State Fiscal Year 2023 Policy](#)
- ◆ Planting Plan and Landowner Agreement completed before planting

Eligible Woody Buffer Expenses

- ◆ See [CWIP guidelines](#) for extensive list of all ineligible expenses: (pg. 15 and 16)
- ◆ Cost Reimbursable grant
- ◆ Eligible Expenses for Woody Buffer Planting:
 - Mileage
 - Trees/shrubs
 - Planting Crews/staff
 - Project management
 - Creating Project Planting Plan for site
 - Tools under \$5,000 (shovels, planting gear (gloves, rain gear, planting boots), saw dust and sorting bags for tree storage, wagon or carts to transport trees on large sites, stakes or flagging to mark planting area, items for tree survival/maintenance)

Woody Buffer Milestones and Deliverables

Project Type	Milestones	Deliverables
Riparian Buffer Planting	<p>Project initiated; proposal/bid solicitations issued and contractor selected (if applicable)</p> <p>Sites and constraints identified, DEC River Scientist and Basin Planner approval secured</p> <p>Developed planting plan (including species type, number, and estimated cost) in accordance with SGA or River Corridor Planning recommendations (if available)</p> <p>10-year (minimum) DEC Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Plan drafted and signed; refer to O&M manual for guidance</p> <p>10-year (minimum) access license or easement (if applicable) drafted and signed by landowner; refer to DEC template for guidance</p> <p>Clean Water Project Sign installed during construction if the project is considered publicly visible.</p> <p>Site preparation activities (if applicable)</p> <p>Buffer restoration planting completed</p> <p>Return of Clean Water Project sign to host site (if applicable)</p> <p>Project complete</p>	<p>Photo(s) of site(s) pre-implementation</p> <p>Signed 10-year (minimum) DEC Operation and Maintenance Plan and Agreement, including map of location of planting and final planting plan (species list and counts).</p> <p>Signed 10-year (minimum) access license or easement (if applicable)</p> <p>Photo(s) of site(s) post-implementation, including photo of Clean Water Project Sign (if applicable)</p> <p>Media announcement</p> <p>Final Performance Report or ANR Online Clean Water Project - Project Closeout Form (once available)</p>

Funding Considerations

Our goal is to fund all high quality plantings that meet the requirements of this funding. The following considerations will be used to prioritize DEC plantings:

- Projects located outside the Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog Basins.
- Projects that best align with the statutory intent and goals of the Water Quality Enhancement Grants
- Projects that best leverage existing match funding opportunities (including other WUV held grants)
- Likelihood of planting (landowner commitment)
- Planting cost/acre

DEC Woody Buffer Enhanced Survivorship Planting Funding

Eligible enhanced survivorship treatment practices include:

- 1) Assessing prior planting projects for condition to prioritize sites for enhanced survivorship treatment,
- 2) Supplemental plantings to restore target stem density of at least 300 stems per acre or more (as long as loss of density was due to natural and not human-caused influences)
- 3) Weeding and vine removal around the immediate vicinity of stems to help new plantings (1-3 years old) get established above vegetative competition.

Enhanced Survivorship Treatment may only be performed on sites supported in whole or in part with DEC funds and registered within the [Clean Water Project Explorer](#) as “River – Planting” project type OR new planting projects funded this year through DEC Woody Buffer funds

Applying for Enhanced Survivorship Funding can be done in same application as request for initial planting funds

Enhancement funds can be used through 2026 (one year after planting)

2025 PUR Planting Funds

- ◆ PUR is a company specialized in the development of agroforestry community projects, and distribution of environmental services, in particular for companies willing to voluntarily participate in planting activities.
- ◆ PUR funding overview: The purpose of the program is to implement tree planting for watershed health and ecosystem services. WUV has a contract with PUR Project to subgrant funds to watershed groups and partners to implement tree planting projects with a primary focus on planting agricultural properties
- ◆ PUR funds can be paired with DEC Woody Buffer and NFWF Funds, these funds can't be paired with funding sources that use the number of stems planted as the performance metric
- ◆ Funds must be used on private land with engaged landowners (agricultural properties are preferred, some upland plantings may be eligible)
- ◆ **Only requires 1 year of monitoring (2026) instead of 2 years on previously funded PUR plantings**
- ◆ ***2025 Available Stems: ~6,000 stems (Spring and Fall Plantings)***

PUR Planting Requirements

- ◆ Planting must be on private land
- ◆ **Planting group is responsible for monitoring the sites after one year from planting. Planting group will be responsible for ensuring that the survivorship rate of trees is above 75% and will replant trees if survivorship falls under that number;**
- ◆ Planting group will establish and provide a Planting Plan for each site;
- ◆ **Planting group will sign PUR Agreement with farmer/landowner;**
- ◆ Planting group will complete the planting registry for each site (Excel and GIS) and update after each monitoring. The registry includes information on number of trees planted and survival rates, land history, location, planting model, etc. (attached);
- ◆ **Planting group must provide WUV with detailed information on each landowner participants, including history, pictures;**
- ◆ Planting group will provide WUV with at least 2 before and 2 after project photos for each site (more preferred);
- ◆ **Planting group will provide at least 1 testimonial to WUV from a landowner with the benefits of the program ;**
- ◆ Planting group will provide WUV with overview of impact of plantings as WUV needs to provide a written report on the progress of the program and its environmental impacts;
- ◆ Planting group will, where appropriate, encourage the landowner to be have PUR staff for a site visit.
- ◆ No match requirements

PUR Monitoring

- ◆ Planting group is responsible for monitoring the sites after one year from planting. Planting group will be responsible for ensuring that the survivorship rate of trees is above 75% and will replant trees if survivorship falls under that number
- ◆ WUV and PUR has developed a transect sampling method that can be used to monitor sites with PUR funding instead of counting all stems
- ◆ Method creates plots that are used to represent the health of the entire buffer
- ◆ If interested in learning more about the sampling method, please reach out to Christian@watershedsunitedvt.org
- ◆ PUR funding for first year post planting is for monitoring but not maintenance of site, for maintenance, you will have to access wither NFWF or DEC funds.

PUR Payment Structure

Funds from PUR will be disbursed to watershed groups as follows:

- ◆ **\$5.50** per tree can be paid after landowner agreement signed
- ◆ **\$1.25** per tree after planting season is complete, and after submission of the planting registry, GPS files, pictures, and the planting report. This can be twice per year – after the spring and fall planting seasons.
- ◆ **\$0.50** per tree after 1-year monitoring report is submitted. WUV has developed a monitoring program for watershed groups that utilizes transect sampling to accurately and efficiently monitor planted areas.
- ◆ ***Total: \$7.25 per stem (this represents planting cost not just the cost of the stem)***

PUR Next Steps

- ◆ If you are interested in utilizing PUR stems - indicate it in the narrative section of the 2025 Riparian Buffer Site Specific Application and make sure NOT to opt out of PUR funds in the application.
- ◆ Because PUR pays a total of \$7.25/stem it usually needs to be paired with another funding source (DEC Woody Buffer or NFWF), however if your site can't meet the requirements of DEC and NFWF funds, PUR only can be an option, if so - please reach out to WUV directly before completing the site specific application as you may not need to complete all section of the application.

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)

- ◆ National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Grant. This grant is a subgrant to WUV from the Natural Resources Conservation Council to support watershed groups with riparian plantings in priority areas for habitat improvement, particularly focused on Eastern brook trout, wood turtle and migratory birds. Similar site requirements exist to the DEC WBBG funds.
- ◆ **2025 WUV NFWF Available Funding: \$30,000**
- ◆ Match Requirement: 1 to 1 match requirement. PUR Projet and DEC Woody Buffer funds can be used as match with this funding. However, WUV will take responsibility for working with applicants to ensure match.

NFWF - Monitoring/Site Maintenance

- ◆ The grant focuses on using enhancement techniques to improve survivability of plantings over time and funds can be used for that purpose (monitoring, weeding, replanting).
- ◆ Activities for maintenance and monitoring can be funded through 2026. There is no comprehensive list of maintenance activities allowable under these funds but all activities must work to achieve the following goal:
 - **improve survivorship to goal of 75% (goal not mandatory)**
- ◆ **NFWF funds will likely be the most flexible funding source to utilize for maintenance activities (cutting around trees, tree tubes, wrapping trees for mole/vole pressure), site preparation, etc. If there is an activity that can help increase survivability, it is likely eligible under NFWF funds.**

NFWF Next Steps

- ◆ If you are interested in utilizing NFWF stems - indicate it in the narrative section of the 2025 Riparian Buffer Site Specific Application and be sure to correctly answer whether Brook Trout or Wood Turtles are present at the planting site. Please make sure NOT to opt out of NFWF funds in the application.

Where to apply for funding?

- ◆ The Natural Resources Conservation Council also holds the Woody Buffer Block Grant and the NFWF funding source. WUV recommends that Conservation Districts apply to NRCC for planting funds. However, all eligible entities can apply through any Funding Program Administrator for DEC planting funds if there is a need.
- ◆ If interested in this fund through NRCD, please contact: jess.miller@vacd.org

Questions!

Please reach out to the WUV team with any additional questions!