

FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT RESTORATION AND ENHANCEMENT



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) Program May 2024

Apply for funding to conserve New York State's diverse fish and wildlife by restoring and enhancing important habitats. Municipalities (including Indian Nations), non-profit organizations, and soil and water conservation districts can receive state money to restore and enhance wetlands and riparian corridors that serve as critical locations for native fish and wildlife to nest, spawn, forage, migrate, and overwinter.

Program Overview

The Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) program is a competitive, statewide, reimbursement New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) grant program. One project type offered through WQIP is for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement. This project type provides funding for projects that will, as their primary goal, restore and/or enhance impaired, degraded, or marginal fish and wildlife habitat by directly addressing one or more factors that are compromising the habitat's value. Projects will improve a habitat's ability to serve as a high-quality spawning, nursery, wintering, migratory, nesting, breeding, or foraging environment for fish and wildlife. Projects should prioritize species of conservation concern or interest, including state-designated Species of Greatest Conservation Need. By restoring habitats that are essential for behaviors, such as foraging and breeding, projects can help address one of the most significant threats to the state's fish and wildlife—habitat loss and impairment.

- **Maximum grant amount: \$1,000,000**
- **Required match: at least 25% of requested grant amount**
- **Project Subtypes: Wetlands and Riparian Corridors**
- **Eligible project costs:** equipment and materials; salary and fringe benefits; travel; contractual services; planning, design, administrative, and construction oversight costs (not to exceed 20% of total project costs); construction inspection; reconstruction, revitalization, and rejuvenation activities; restoration and enhancement activities.

For full grant details view the WQIP Program Overview at <https://dec.ny.gov/get-involved/grant-applications/wqip-program>.

Why Should You Apply?

- Recreational and intrinsic value of fish and wildlife
- Co-benefits that include flood risk reduction
- Reduction of out-of-pocket costs with available grant funding
- Healthy habitats benefit local communities

KEY POINTS

- \$1,000,000 maximum grant amount
- Required 25% match
- Eligible Applicants: municipalities, not-for-profit organizations, and soil and water conservation districts
- Application Deadline: July 31, 2024, at 4:00 PM

Eligible Applicants

- Municipalities (*ECL §56-0101*)
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Soil and water conservation districts

How to Apply

- WQIP is part of the New York State Consolidated Funding Application (CFA). To apply, visit <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/cfa>. **Applications are due July 31, 2024, at 4:00 PM.**

For more information, or to sign up for email updates from NYSDEC, visit our website:

dec.ny.gov

Road Map for Success

Below are some steps to consider when applying for a WQIP Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Grant.

Step 1. Learn about the program

- Visit the WQIP webpage (see URL under Contact Information) to learn more about the grant program.

Step 2. Gather information

- Review any existing local or regional watershed management, conservation, or land use plans for your area. These documents can offer critical information about important local habitat resources and/or project ideas. Applications for projects that address needs or priorities identified in an existing plan will receive additional points in the scoring rubric.
- Identify and engage with potential local or regional partners that share the same geographic and conservation focus.

Step 3. Select project site and develop a scope of work

- Use the information from Step 2 to identify important wetland and riparian resource areas. These may be large wetland or riverine systems or smaller resources that are locally significant because of their specific attributes, the surrounding landscape, or their restoration potential.
- If you are not the landowner of the resource area, identify who is and secure the necessary landowner agreements. To be eligible for funding, the project must have a useful life of at least 20 years or a long-term maintenance plan.
- Assess the current conditions, including ecological function and habitat value, and identify factors that are impairing the habitat and could be addressed to improve function and value.
- Consult with technical experts on project design, budget, and permitting needs. If a wetland or stream restoration ecologist or similar professional is not part of your project team, consider working with a partner with that capacity or a qualified consulting firm.

Step 4. Apply for funding

- Use the information gathered in steps 2 and 3 to fill out a WQIP application for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement (available through the CFA at <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/>.)

Step 5. Implement the project

- If you receive a WQIP grant for Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Enhancement, DEC will work with you to develop a contract that establishes the terms and conditions for completing the project. Most projects will need to be completed within three years of the funding award. In addition to the approved contract, all necessary permits and local approvals are required before starting work.

Step 6. Post-completion monitoring and maintenance

- While grant resources can only be used for project implementation, long-term monitoring and maintenance are critical for success and must be considered when planning your project and developing the grant application.

CONTACT INFORMATION

On the web: <https://dec.ny.gov/get-involved/grant-applications/wqip-program>

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