

York River Watershed Grants Program

Request for Proposals – issued February 1, 2024

The York River Stewardship Committee (Stewardship Committee) requests proposals for projects that implement the [York River Watershed Stewardship Plan](#) to protect or enhance watershed resources.

Proposals are due by April 30, 2024.

Purpose: This funding opportunity is intended to support activities undertaken by municipalities and local organizations to protect river and watershed resources and facilitate strong local stewardship in accordance with the *York River Watershed Stewardship Plan*. The Stewardship Plan identifies objectives and actions intended to preserve the York River watershed's natural resources, ecosystem health, water quality, historic resources, and cultural resources and promote sustainable uses. The Stewardship Committee anticipates this grant program will be an annual funding opportunity, made possible by a partnership with the National Park Service through the Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program.

Funding and awards:

- Funding requests can range from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per application.
- Projects are expected to begin on July 1, 2024 and last for up to 12 months; slightly longer durations will be accommodated if an entity can demonstrate the need.
- Funds are from the National Park Service Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program (CFDA 15.962), provided through a Cooperative Agreement with the Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve (WNERR), the fiscal agent for the Stewardship Committee.
- Successful applicants will enter into a contract agreement with WNERR; as recipients, entities will be responsible for meeting financial reporting requirements, and certain other federal laws and regulations.
- Awardees will be required to submit a final project report that summarizes the work and accomplishments; includes associated products or deliverables; and includes a financial report demonstrating how the funds were used. An interim progress report may be required for some projects. Reporting requirements, mandatory funding acknowledgement, and other terms will be included in the contract agreement.
- It is anticipated that up to 50% of the contract amount will be paid to awardees once progress is demonstrated on the project, with the balance of funds awarded at the conclusion of the project following submission of all deliverables and receipts, as outlined in the contract agreement. Where an entity can demonstrate the need, start-up funding may be provided for its project.

Who can apply: Eligible entities include community-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, municipal boards/committees and municipal departments including schools, and water districts. Groups that are not non-profit organizations and individuals interested in applying should partner with a town board or department or a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to serve as the lead applicant. Statewide or regional nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations and state, regional, or county government agencies outside the York River watershed communities of Eliot, Kittery, South Berwick, and York are eligible if they apply for projects that directly benefit the York River watershed and its communities. Project proposals must clearly demonstrate this connection.

Eligible entities may submit up to two proposals, but each application must be for a discrete project. An entity can be a partner on any number of applications submitted (and led) by others.

Application: Proposals are due by 5:00 p.m. on April 30, 2024, and should be submitted as an attachment in an email to jh.yorkriver@gmail.com. The fillable application form provided (Word format) should be used by applicants. If this format is problematic, other formats may be used to develop your application, but it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure all requested information is provided. The [York River Watershed Grants Program – 2024 APPLICATION FORM](#) can be accessed and downloaded from www.YorkRiverMaine.org or can be requested by email from jh.yorkriver@gmail.com. If you are unable to submit your application by email, contact Jennifer Hunter (jh.yorkriver@gmail.com) to let her know you will be submitting it by mail. Mailed applications must be postmarked no later than April 30 and mailed to: York River Stewardship Committee, c/o Wells Reserve, 342 Laudholm Farm Road, Wells, ME 04090.

Eligible activities: Projects must directly address objectives listed in the [York River Watershed Stewardship Plan](#) to positively impact York River watershed resources, including historic resources, natural resources (watershed landscape; habitats, wildlife, and biodiversity; water resources; water quality; climate resilience), working waterfront, sustainable recreation, or scenic resources. Types of activities and approaches can include resource protection, habitat restoration, monitoring or assessment, documentation, mapping, training, education, outreach, planning, demonstrating or installing sustainable practices, capacity building, community engagement, citizen science, or other resource stewardship. It is the applicant's responsibility to identify, plan for, and secure any permits or other approvals necessary to conduct the proposed activities.

Requested funding cannot be used for:

- Membership recruitment and/or fundraising materials and activities
- Events for which there are fees to participate or that are not open to the public
- Projects mandated as part of a regulatory requirement or to address violation enforcement or mitigation requirements
- Lobbying or other activities for which the use of federal funds is prohibited

Project locations: Site-based projects should be located in the [York River watershed](#) or should directly enhance, protect, or promote York River watershed resources. Town-wide implementation or project implementation in areas extending beyond or completely outside of the York River watershed but within a watershed community or several communities is acceptable for certain types of projects or activities that are consistent with the goals and actions of the *York River Watershed Stewardship Plan*.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact Jennifer Hunter, jh.yorkriver@gmail.com, prior to starting the application process to confirm their eligibility and discuss the appropriateness of their project for the York River Watershed Grants Program.

Proposal evaluation: A York River Stewardship Committee subcommittee will review and evaluate all proposals and make funding recommendations to the full Stewardship Committee for approval. The subcommittee or the Stewardship Committee reserves the right to request additional information from any applicant. The subcommittee will consider the following factors and aspects in its evaluation of proposals:

- Connection to *York River Watershed Stewardship Plan* objectives
- Thoroughness of project plan and soundness of approach
- Realistic timeframe
- Anticipated benefits
- Clearly articulated and measurable outcomes
- Reasonableness of project costs (Note – matching or leveraged funds are not required for this grant funding; however, budgets should include all funds required for the project including in-kind support, and projects that include additional funding sources will be viewed favorably.)

- Sustainability, transferability, improved capacity, or long-term benefits
- Capability and experience to complete a successful project

Timeline:

- RFP issued – February 1, 2024
- Applications due – April 30, 2024
- Subcommittee review and evaluation of proposals – by May 23, 2024 (anticipated)
- Stewardship Committee funding decisions and applicants notified – by May 31, 2024 (anticipated)
- Contract agreements developed and executed – by June 30, 2024 (anticipated)
- Projects start – on or shortly after July 1, 2024 (anticipated)

Questions: All questions regarding this funding opportunity should be directed to Jennifer Hunter, York River Watershed Program Coordinator, by email: jh.yorkriver@gmail.com. Opportunities to talk by phone or in a virtual meeting can be arranged, if requested by email.

RESOURCES

[York River Watershed Grants Program – 2024 APPLICATION FORM](#)

<http://www.yorkrivermaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/APPLICATION-FORM-YRWGP-2-1-24.docx>

[York River Watershed Stewardship Plan](#)

<http://www.yorkrivermaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/York-River-Watershed-Stewardship-Plan-August-2018.pdf>

[York River watershed map](#)

<http://www.yorkrivermaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Proposed-Stream-Reaches-Poster-Size-Dec2017.pdf>