

Surface Water Management Grants – Healthy Lakes & Rivers



Healthy Lakes & Rivers is a subprogram of the Surface Water Management grant program that focuses on shoreland landowners that want to install practices on their property to improve habitat and water quality. Healthy Lakes & Rivers grants support five simple and inexpensive best practices that may be installed in the littoral, transition/buffer, and upland zones of shoreland properties. Practices must follow department guidelines published

in the Healthy Lakes and Rivers Action Plan and supporting technical guidance. See [Appendix D: Healthy Lakes & Rivers](#). Detailed information is available on the Healthy Lakes & Rivers website: <https://healthylakeswi.com/>

PREREQUISITES

Eligible organization

First-time applicants submit a pre-application by Sept 2, returning customers need not pre-apply.

Final applications are due November 1.

First-time applicants must provide design plans for approval before implementation

FUNDING

Grants may be awarded for up to 75% of total project costs, up to \$25,000. \$1,000 in state cost-share is available per practice. At least 90% of the DNR cost share of a project must be spent on implementation. Tangential costs like project management or technical assistance may make up no more than 10% of the state cost share, calculated on a per project basis.

REIMBURSEMENTS

One grant advance is available for up to 25% of the total grant award.

A grantee may request up to 4 partial payments overall, no more frequently than one per year.

10% of the grant award is retained until approval of deliverables and reimbursement.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Best practices include fish sticks, native plantings, diversion practices, rain gardens and rock infiltration. Fish sticks are not eligible for rivers.

CONDITIONS

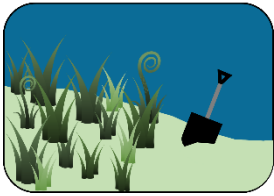
Operation and maintenance requirements are prescribed by the department and must be followed. A signed conservation contract indicating a commitment to operate and maintain the practices' function for at least 10 years must be obtained for all participating landowners.

Locations limited to within 1,000 ft of a lake ordinary high-water mark, a wetland that is part of an aquatic ecosystem, or the greater distance of 300 ft to a river or the landward side of a floodplain.

Grantees may request a one-time cost amendment to add projects to an existing grant by submitting the Healthy Lakes and Rivers Grant Amendment Request ([Form 8700-381](#)). Total award cannot exceed \$25,000.



Surface Water Management Grants – Surface Water Restoration



Surface water restoration grants help implement protection and restoration actions. Unlike plan implementation grants, these projects *don't* require a management plan, however, projects shall follow the appropriate NRCS standards published in Appendix E: Surface Water Restoration. Applications shall be submitted with a project design plan.

PREREQUISITES

Eligible organization; see exceptions pertaining to Wetland Incentives below.

Applicants must submit their pre-application by September 2, applications are due November 1.

Restoration projects shall be submitted with a project design plan.

Ordinance development projects require a letter of support from the unit of government likely to adopt the ordinance.

If property is state-owned, the applicant must have a recorded land use agreement or a letter of intent from the property manager.

Public access is required for projects that enhance in-water habitat.

FUNDING

Grants cover up to 75% of total project costs, \$50,000 for lakes and wetlands, \$25,000 for rivers.

Wetland incentives are also available: these are not cost-shared; each incentive grant is \$10,000.

REIMBURSEMENTS

One grant advance is available for up to 25% of the total grant award.

A grantee may request up to 4 partial payments overall, no more frequently than one per year.

10% of the grant award is retained until approval of deliverables and reimbursement.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Shoreland protection projects must follow applicable standards of [s. ATCP 50](#) and published in the NRCS [Field Office Technical Guide](#) for Wisconsin, Section IV. We included direct links for each practice in [Appendix E: Surface Water Restoration Practice Standards](#).

- Critical area stabilization
- Diversions
- Filter strips
- Grade stabilization structures on artificial or non-navigable watercourses
- Riparian buffers
- Water bar diversion
- Sediment and water basins
- Pervious pavement
- Rain gardens
- Vegetation planting
- Urban pollution and runoff control
- Streambank or shoreline protection
- Impervious area removal within 35 feet of the ordinary high-water mark

In-Water Management projects protect or improve in-water conditions. Eligible activities include the installation of department-approved habitat structures, culvert or road crossing removal or modification and aquatic re-vegetation. For connectivity projects, see [Appendix F: Surface Water Connectivity](#). Other projects are subject to department approval.

Wetland Restoration projects will help restore or enhance a prior converted or existing wetland. Projects must occur on hydric soils and implement the best practices for wetland restoration or enhancement. Projects must follow the [NRCS standards](#) for either [Wetland Restoration \(657\)](#) or [Wetland Enhancement \(659\)](#). Eligible activities included drainage tile disablement, ditch plugs and

fills, water level manipulation or vegetation enhancement, but cannot be necessary to achieve mitigation standards.

Wetland Incentives amounting to up to \$10,000 each, with no cost-share required, are available for grantees who have completed a comprehensive land use plan that includes a recommendation for wetland enhancement or restoration. Activities are the same as those for Wetland Restoration projects, above. **Note:** Comprehensive land use plans are defined by Wisconsin state statute, s. 66.1001 (1) (a). Qualified Surface Water Management Organizations and Nonprofit Conservation Organizations are not eligible for Wetland Incentives.

Ordinance Development projects create local regulations to benefit surface waters. They relate to topics like boating, AIS prevention, wetlands, shorelands, erosion control and others. Eligible activities include development, legal work, facility rental, training for compliance and enforcement, outreach, and assessment of administrative and enforcement capacity. Applications must include a letter of support from the unit of government most likely to implement the ordinance.

CONDITIONS

Locations limited to within 1,000 ft of a lake ordinary high-water mark, a wetland that is part of an aquatic ecosystem, or the greater distance of 300 ft to a river or the landward side of a floodplain.

Unless state-owned, a grantee shall have control over the restored property and ensure its conservation value is maintained for at least 20 years with easements, deed restrictions or recorded contracts. If property is state-owned, the applicant must have a recorded land use agreement or a letter of intent from the property manager at the time of application.

Streambank or shoreline protection projects may contain structural practices (e.g. rip rap) where the site assessment determines bioengineering and vegetation management will not control erosion. Structural practices must include shoreland habitat restoration following the NRCS [sho reland habitat standard 643A](#). Planting dimensions shall be a minimum of 35 feet deep with an exception for principal structures, extending the entire length of the project or property, save an optional viewing and access corridor, and shall include structurally diverse plantings.

PROJECT DESIGN PLAN

Surface water restoration projects do not require a comprehensive management plan, but they must be appropriate and designed for the site. Be sure to reference relevant NRCS standards in your application. With your application, you must also submit a **project design plan that includes the following elements:**

Project implementation timeline

Establish goals and objectives for the project and outline tasks to accomplish them. Organize the tasks on a schedule, include a timeline indicating start, end, and who will accomplish the task.

Maintenance plan

Describe how the project will be managed or maintained to maintain its conservation value for a period of 20 years.

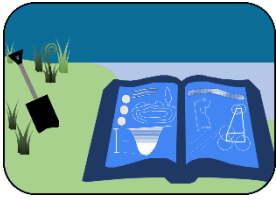
Site map

Indicate the location and bounds of the project. "Before" photos of the site are strongly encouraged.

Additional supporting documents (if applicable)

Many of the projects fundable under this section require design; some of them require engineering. You may include additional materials that will help biologists understand what the project will accomplish. Consider including schematics, site plans, a monitoring plan and schedule, landscape designs or vegetation planting lists as appropriate for the project.

Surface Water Management Grants – Management Plan Implementation



Management plan implementation projects will always implement an approved recommendation found in a surface water management plan. Projects will improve or protect surface water or aquatic ecosystems. Eligible activities include the actions necessary to implement the recommendation. Detailed instructions related to management plans and their required elements, and how to go about getting recommendation and implementation projects approved can be found in [Appendix B: Management Planning](#).

PREREQUISITES

Eligible organization

Applicants must submit their pre-application by September 2, applications are due November 1. Applicants must request a determination of project eligibility by September 2 (See *Conditions*). Public access is required when projects enhance in-water habitat (e.g., aeration, habitat work). If property is state-owned, the applicant must have a recorded land use agreement or a letter of intent from the property manager.

FUNDING

Grants cover up to 75% of total project costs, \$200,000 for lakes and wetlands, \$50,000 for rivers.

REIMBURSEMENTS

One grant advance is available for up to 25% of the total grant award, not to exceed \$25,000. A grantee may request up to 4 partial payments overall, no more frequently than one per year. 10% of the grant award is retained until approval of deliverables and reimbursement documentation.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Management plan implementation grants support a broad range of projects, some examples are below:

Nonpoint Source Pollution Control projects reduce the loading of nutrients and sediment into the waterbody. A wide range of best management practices are available depending on the pollution source and location. For additional examples, see the list of practices outlined under s. NR 154.04. Applications should be specific as to the BMPs proposed and their location.

Habitat Restoration projects improve the shoreline, nearshore or upland habitat in a way that will significantly improve the ecological condition of surface water or aquatic life.

Water Quality projects address problems related to water quality that remain after best management practices have controlled nonpoint source pollution. Activities include alum treatments or other solutions that support a return to the natural characteristics of a lake, wetland, or river.

Management Staffing grants provide funding for implementation and support. The project must result in the implementation of one or more approved recommendations in one or more management plans. Applications must be submitted with a position description, including goals, objectives and tasks, and the percentage of time assigned to each activity. For grants of over 1,000 hours, the department may require semi-annual performance reviews.

Applied Management studies employ a research-based approach to increase understanding of surface water management. Projects must implement an approved recommendation from a management plan; some will involve close collaboration with community groups. Projects will

employ innovative approaches, experiments, or otherwise increase understanding waterbody protection and restoration.

Landowner Incentives encourage the implementation of an approved management plan recommendation. Payments may provide incentive for installing conservation best practices, participating in program-approved initiatives, or taking agricultural land out of production. Landowner incentive costs do not include the cost of implementation of the best management practice. Applications must include a justification, a description of the payment and documentation process, and expected outcomes. Incentive payments may make up no more than 10% of total project cost of a grant. One-time or annual incentive payments should include compensation for a period no greater than 3 years or the duration of the grant period.

CONDITIONS

Implementation projects must be consistent with an approved recommendation in a management plan. A grantee must request a determination of eligibility for one or more recommendations in a current management plan at least 60 days prior to the final application deadline. The request must include 1) a cover letter with a brief description of the activities proposed for grant funding, 2) The citation of the supporting recommendation(s) in the plan, 3) a complete copy of the management plan, and 4) a summary of any public comments received.

Management plans establish project eligibility. Plans must supply enough information for a biologist to evaluate the recommendation. Biologists will consider ecological condition, management goals, recommendations and alternatives, management history, and stakeholder views. A plan funded with a Surface Water Planning Grant will provide this information. Other plans (e.g. Nine Key Element Plans, Total Maximum Daily Load implementation plans, county land and water plans, aquatic plant management plans) may also provide the necessary information to establish project eligibility. For more information, see the section on eligibility determinations at the end of [Appendix B: Management Planning](#).

External sources or causative factors that create adverse conditions must be controlled to the best practical extent possible before a project is eligible under this section. It is better to treat the ultimate cause of a problem rather than repeatedly treating the symptoms. Eligible projects must be likely to meet the management objectives or achieve state water quality standards.

It is important that state dollars are invested in projects that will maintain their conservation value over time. Unless the property is owned by the state, the grantee shall have control over the property through ownership, easements, deed restrictions or recorded contracts such that the sites being restored with grant funds maintain their conservation value for at least 20 years. If property is state-owned, the applicant must have a recorded land use agreement or a letter of intent from the property manager at the time of application.

Eligible plans have a completion date of no more than 10 years prior to the year in which an implementation grant application is submitted. The department may determine a longer lifespan is appropriate if the applicant can demonstrate a plan has been actively implemented and updated during its lifespan.