

New Hampshire Aquatic Resource Mitigation Program Accepting Grant Applications for the Connecticut – Johns – Waits River Watershed

Concord, NH - The New Hampshire Aquatic Resource Mitigation Program at the Department of Environmental Services is currently accepting grant applications for funding projects within the Connecticut River from the Johns River to Waits River Watershed. The DES Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Fund provides an in-lieu fee payment alternative for permit applicants to consider when striving to meet state and federal wetland mitigation requirements. Payments are deposited into 16 watershed accounts, which then can be used for aquatic resource restoration projects or to permanently protect wetlands with high conservation value. The ARM funds are ready to be awarded to eligible projects in the watershed.

An example of a successful project is one that provides restoration of functions and values and once restored, will retain increased functions over the long-term. Protection of the surrounding upland buffer through a conservation easement elevates its ability to meet the goals of the program. Restoration includes wetland fill removal, culvert removal/replacement, elimination of ditching and other hydrologic modifications, invasive species control only if hydrologic modifications indicate long-term success, installation of water quality BMPs, habitat enhancement opportunities for threatened or endangered species, or planting buffers to promote habitat.

The Connecticut – Johns – Waits River Watershed will be the second of the 16 watershed ARM Fund accounts to be ready for release. As these funds are tied to wetland mitigation requirements, the proposal ranking criteria will favor those projects that restore and permanently protect the functions and values of aquatic resources that were lost within the watershed during the grant cycle. The primary functions lost include wildlife habitat and groundwater discharge.

NHDES is pleased to announce that up to **\$157,000.00** is available through the ARM Fund for eligible projects within the Connecticut – Johns – Waits River Watershed.

Grant Application Information:

Application Submission Deadline – One hard copy and one copy in PDF format of the completed application and all associated documentation are due at the DES Wetlands Bureau office (address below) **no later than 4:00 PM on March 26, 2010**. Please note DES cannot accept documents larger than 10 MB. The application form with instructions is available on our Web site at www.des.nh.gov. Once on the DES homepage, click on the A-Z list on the upper right hand corner of the screen and scroll down to “Wetlands Bureau,” and find “Mitigation” under Related Programs at <http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/wmp/index.htm>.

Eligible Applicants – Any of New Hampshire's communities wholly or partially located within the Connecticut River-Johns-Waits River watershed; Coos and Grafton County governments; Regional Planning Commissions; County Conservation Districts; Watershed/River Associations; state agencies; departments within the University of New Hampshire and other institutions of higher education; community public school districts; and nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply.

Eligible Uses of ARM Funds – Grants are offered for activities that restore or protect aquatic resources, including but not limited to the following:

- 1) Development of final wetland restoration, enhancement, or creation plans;
- 2) Construction costs for wetland restoration, enhancement, or creation such as site clearing and excavation, construction management, consulting fees, permit costs, wetland grading and soil augmentation, disposal costs of excavated materials, planting, and monitoring and maintenance of wetland restoration or creation sites to reduce risk of failure;
- 3) Acquisition of land or conservation easements that help protect high conservation value wetlands in perpetuity and associated costs including property surveys, appraisals, legal costs, closing costs, and subdivision fees;
- 4) Acquisition of conservation interests after a qualified grantee has been identified;
- 5) Stewardship of a conservation interest; and
- 6) Other aquatic resource improvement or protection projects, such as water quality improvement projects, dam removal projects, stream or river restoration projects, or activities that provide habitat improvement including culvert replacement or removal.

This list is not exhaustive so check the evaluation criteria contained in the application packet to see if your project is eligible. Reviewers will favor proposals that clearly demonstrate how the project's wetland protection, restoration, enhancement, or creation will be sustainable over the long-term. The criteria used to evaluate and rank the applications can also be found in the DES rules at Env-Wt 807.17 and 807.18,

<http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/legal/rules/index.htm> .

Geographic Requirement – Projects must take place within the boundaries of the Upper Connecticut River Hydrologic Unit Code 8 (HUC 8) watershed (see map at http://des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wetlands/wmp/graphics/watershed_towns.jpg).

Matching Requirements – ARM program funds could cover complete or partial funding for all project costs. The state funds do not need to be matched by other sources but an application may score additional points if a match is secured. Match sources can include donated funds, donated municipal staff time, volunteer time, and donated materials. The match must be secure in order to score additional points through the evaluation criteria.

Submit one hard copy and one copy in PDF format to:

NH Dept. of Environmental Services
ATTN: Lori Sommer
Wetlands Bureau
29 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03302

For Further Assistance and Electronic Submission - Lori Sommer, Mitigation Coordinator at (603) 271-4059 or e-mail at: Lori.Sommer@des.nh.gov.