



WUV Enhancement Dam Removal Block Grant Webinar

9/24/2025





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Watersheds United Vermont (WUV)

Watersheds United Vermont (WUV) is an association of community-based watershed groups across Vermont with a mission to empower watershed groups to protect and restore Vermont's waters.

WUV currently holds 5 Department of Environmental Conservation Block Grants to subgrant funds to eligible entities for clean water restoration efforts including:

- Enhancement Project Development Block Grant
- Enhancement Design and Implementation Block Grant
- ***Enhancement Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant (Dam Removal DIBG)***
- Enhancement Riparian Buffer Grant
- Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development (CWWCD) Block Grant



Enhancement Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant Overview

Watersheds United Vermont (WUV) is administering a new round of funding under the Enhancement Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant program, which will serve to support dam removal projects that meet the statutory intent and goals of the Water Quality Enhancement Grants. Funding is provided by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's (VT DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP). WUV seeks proposals for the preliminary design, final design, and implementation of dam removal projects.

All grant information can be found on WUV's Grants Webpage

<https://watershedsunitedvt.org/grants/enhancement-dam-removal-design-and-implementation-block-grant>



Ongoing WUV DEC Dam Removal DIBG

Original Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant: Awarded to WUV in April 2022

Amendment with additional funds: February 2024

Total Project Completion Award: \$2,200,000

Grant End Date: 11/28/26

Projects Awarded: 23 Total (3 Preliminary Design, 8 Final Design, 12 Implementation)

Likely fully obligated, but possibility of remaining funds that would be combined with this grant round if projects will be completed by 2026.



Key Dates

September 8, 2025: WUV Enhancement Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant Request for Proposals Released

October 24, 2025: Full Project Application, Project Readiness, and Eligibility Screening Due

End of November 2025: Funding Decisions Announced

This funding is for projects that will be designed and/or implemented in 2026 and 2027.



Available Funds

October 2025 Grant Round:

Preliminary Design, Final Design, Implementation: ~\$1,250,000

Total Grant Funds: \$2,125,000

WUV will release another round of funding in spring/summer 2026

There is no required distribution of funds between preliminary, final, and implementation projects, but WUV will work to fund a variety of different project phases across different areas of the state!

<i>Project Type</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Performance measure</i>
Dam Removal – Preliminary Engineering Design	Preliminary design of a high priority dam removal project to restore hydrologic connectivity of surface waters. May involve alternatives analysis. Work must result in at least 30% design of the project.	Number of preliminary (30%) designs completed
Dam Removal – Final Engineering Design	Final design of high priority dam removal project to restore hydrologic connectivity of surface waters. Work includes preparing permit application(s) and documentation of operation and maintenance plan(s).	Number of final (90%/100%) designs completed
Dam Removal – Implementation	Implementation of a high priority dam removal project to restore hydrologic connectivity of surface waters. Permit(s), access license(s)/easement(s), and operation and maintenance plan(s) are in place prior to construction.	Acres of floodplain restored Linear feet of stream restored Stream miles reconnected for stream equilibrium/aquatic organism passage

<i>Project Type</i>	<i>Milestones</i>	<i>Deliverables</i>
Dam Removal – Preliminary Engineering Design	Project initiated; proposal/bid solicitations issued and contractor selected (if applicable)	Feasibility factors report, conceptual site plan.
	Field and desktop research for feasibility factors	DEC programmatic staff comments on design
	Conceptual site plan drafted	Signed VDHP Project Review Form
	Stakeholder meetings	Preliminary Design Report
	DEC Programmatic Staff Engagement	Media announcement
	Other permit-required assessments or plans completed (if applicable)	Final Performance Report or ANR Online Clean Water Project - Project Closeout Form (once available)
	30% design complete	Batch Import File or ANR Online Clean Water Project - New Project Form (once available)
	Preliminary VDHP Project Review	
Project complete		

[All milestone and deliverable tables for each project phase can be found in our grant guidelines here!](#)



Project Eligibility

1. Eligibility Screens #1-7: The 2023 CWIP Funding Policy lists seven criteria (#1-7) that are applicable across all relevant CWIP Funding Programs. To ensure that the project meets these eligibility criteria, you must complete the **[Enhancement Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form](#)** which will guide you through the first 7 eligibility requirements.



Project Eligibility

2. Project must be non-regulatory: To be eligible for Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant funds, projects cannot be driven by a regulatory requirement. Regulatory projects are those required/compelled by water quality-related regulatory programs.



Project Eligibility

3. Projects must meet at least one of the statutorily-defined purposes for Enhancement Grants:

There are 5 statutorily defined purposes for the Enhancement grant program:

- a. Protect high quality waters,
- b. Maintain or improve water quality,
- c. Restore degraded or stressed waters,
- d. Create resilient watersheds and communities, or
- e. Support the public's use and enjoyment of the State's waters

For a project to be eligible, it must meet at least one of the above purposes. In the application, you will be asked to address in narrative each one of the project purposes that your project will meet.

[See definitions for each one of these categories on page 8 and 9 of the grant guidelines!](#)

Eligible Entities

Vermont municipalities
Regional planning commissions
Natural resource conservation districts
Non-profit organizations
State agencies
State colleges and universities
Public hospitals and medical centers
Public schools

Ineligible Entities

Private citizens, individuals
Private for-profit businesses and industries
Private for-profit colleges and universities
Federal agencies



Other Project Requirements

- Projects must adhere to all CWIP FY23 Funding Policy to be eligible for funding: [2023 CWIP Fiscal Policy](#)
- Projects and the applicable phase must be in the DEC Watershed Projects Database
- Projects must be approved by the DEC Watershed Planner before funds are awarded
- Projects must be identified/prioritized in existing assessments or plans or approved by DEC Watershed Planner
- For implementation projects, all permits must be in place before implementation occurs
- Applicants must complete the Natural Resource Screening that is part of the Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form



Other Project Requirements

- All projects must complete the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) Review Process
- All project funding recipients must provide proof of insurance and W-9 forms
- Implementation projects must obtain a signed DEC Operation and Maintenance Agreement.
- All design projects must be able to obtain landowner commitment to next steps
- All subcontractors must be approved using the WUV / DEC subcontractor approval process and all subcontracts must include the State of Vermont required subcontract language
- Projects must be planned to be designed or implemented in 2026/2027



Vermont Division for Historic Preservation (VDHP) Project Review

All dam removal projects must complete a VDHP Project Review if they are awarded funding.

Please review pages 30-33 of the CWIP guidelines ([2023 CWIP Fiscal Policy](#)) outline this process. There may be significant expenses incurred during this process especially in the final design phase of dam removals. These expenses are eligible and should be included in your budget. Please review the process before applying to fully understand the potential cost of the VDHP review.

VDHP Project Review Form here: [VDHP Project Review Form](#)

Please note that this review is a project step and does not have to be completed during the application process.

SHPO/VDHP Review is often incorporated into Dam Removal projects through the US Army Corp of Engineers permitting process but please still complete the VDHP Project Review Form even if you have already started the process of engaging with VDHP for your project!



DEC Programmatic Review

This grant requires additional DEC programmatic review to ensure the proposed project is supported by pertinent DEC staff and to make sure any design/project guidance is incorporated into the project..

WUV's application walks applicants through the process of how and who you should reach out to for programmatic review.

Please allow DEC program staff at least three weeks to review your proposed project and provide a response. DEC Programmatic Review should occur prior to every phase of the project (30% preliminary design, 60% if applicable for higher risk projects, 90% final design, and implementation), even if the grant award is for multiple phases of work.

Note, while this may include the same or similar staff, this is different from a preliminary review of permitting needs and natural resource impacts as part of the Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form



Prioritizing Projects

Project Importance: How does the project meet the 5 listed statutorily-defined purposes for Dam Removals under the Enhancement Grant program. Projects will be evaluated on both how well the project meets a purpose and also how many of the statutorily-defined purposes the project meets. For example, a project that highly meets one project purpose will be competitive with a project that moderately meets 2-3 project purposes.

Will the proposed project lead to additional water quality improvements and provide co-benefits as identified in planning and prioritization documents, e.g. Tactical Basin Plans, River Corridor Plans, and Stormwater Master Plans?

Project Scale: Can the proposed project work be completed with the proposed grant dollars available or are sufficient matching funds available to cover the difference?

Project Likelihood: Does the project design and/or implementation have a high chance for success? Are there barriers to this work being completed? What is the financial risk if that is the case? How likely will the project be completed on time? Are there Dam owner commitments and strong partnerships or community support for the project? For design projects, we are evaluating likelihood of design completion and of resulting likelihood of project being implemented.

Project Need: Is there a demonstrated need for the work? And do the DEC Dam Removal Design and Implementation funds fill a need where other funds are not available?

Project Budget: Is the project cost effective for the scope of work proposed? Does the project fit into WUV's dam removal available budget? Are all costs eligible (see CWIP guidelines)?



Prioritizing Projects

- a) WUV must fund 10% of our available funds on projects that have the potential to protect high quality waters, projects that meet this enhancement goal will be given additional scoring points
- b) Projects located outside of watersheds with access to Water Quality Restoration Formula grants will be given extra scoring points but will not automatically trump strong and eligible enhancement dam removal projects located within those watersheds.
- c) Environment Justice Focus Populations. Act 154 of 2022 (S.148) requires the Agency of Natural Resources to direct investments with environmental benefits proportionately to Environmental Justice Focus Populations.



Formula Funds vs Enhancement Funds

If the proposed project is located in a watershed with access to Water Quality Restoration Formula Grants (Champlain and Memphremagog Basins) you will need to determine which funding source is the best fit for your project. Projects can be co-funded between Formula and Enhancement funds.

WUV's application will ask to identify why your project will fit best in the WUV Dam Removal Block Grant as opposed to the Water Quality Restoration Formula Grant program. Below are multiple possible reasons as to why a project might best fit WUV's enhancement funding:

- 1) Not a phosphorus based project
- 2) CWSP confirmed project does not fit into their current funding model
- 3) Below funding threshold for CWSP funding
- 4) Project driven reason (landowner preference, grant round timing, etc)



Budget and Leverage/Match

Budget Categories:

Staff (Salary plus Fringe):

All project management and deliverables documentation and reporting tasks should be included.

Mileage

Contractual (can include up to 15% contingency)

Other eligible costs (see 2023 CWIP Funding Policy)

Indirect:

- Up to 15% on salary and other eligible total direct costs; up to 15% on the first \$50,000 of contractual costs.
- Or, organizations with approved NICRA can use the rate as specified in the NICRA. Please provide NICRA documentation with application if applicable.

[See page 12 of grant guidelines for a list of ineligible expenses](#)

Voluntary leverage/match is appreciated, particularly for larger implementation projects.



Other Funding Considerations

Funds are state dollars from the Vermont Clean Water Fund and **can** be used as match/leverage for other funding sources.

Grant is Performance Based with Cost Reimbursable Terms.

Reimbursement should take less time than in the past.

10% of the project cost will be held until the final deliverables are complete.

All Deliverables and Invoicing must be completed by the end of the subgrant award or no more than 3 months after the end of the project (whichever comes sooner).



Completing the Application

To complete submission of the application for this grant round you must submit the following documents:

1. **WUV Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant Full Application**
2. **Dam Removal Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form**

Applicants must also submit the following documents at time of application submission:

1. Site Plan(s) **(required for implementation projects)**
2. Site Photos **(required for implementation projects)**
3. Written landowner commitment to implement project **(required for implementation projects)**
4. Written landowner commitment to project phase being applied for. **(required for design projects)**
5. Dam Removal Feasibility Studies
6. Additional Bid(s), Quote(s), or Proposal(s)

*Please note we do not need letters of support



Completing the Application

Please complete and submit the application as a single Word or PDF file and submit a second document that combines the Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form and all other supplemental documents.

Email the application and combined Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form and all other supplemental documents to:

WUV Director Lyn Munno at lyn@watershedsunitedvt.org

WUV Grant Manager Christian Pelletier at Christian@watershedsunitedvt.org



Deliverable/Reporting Requirements

[See Grant Guidelines for list of deliverables for each project phase.](#)

Implementation Deliverables:

- Photo(s) of site(s) pre-implementation
- Permit documentation (if applicable)
- Signed 10-year (minimum) DEC Operation and Maintenance Plan
- As-built drawings or red-lined 100% designs with a list of change orders describing adjustments made during construction.
- Photo(s) of site(s) post-implementation, including photo of Clean Water Project Sign (if applicable)
- Media announcement
- Final Performance Report or ANR Online Clean Water Project - Project Closeout Form (once available)

[See WUV website for example templates for deliverables \(Final Performance Report, DEC O&M\)](#)



Questions!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to ask questions. We are happy to help navigate any issues throughout the application process! Please reach out to WUV if you would like to set up a meeting to discuss a potential project!