

Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority – Restoration Program Water Quality / Habitat Improvement Project 2010

Program Description and Eligibility Guidelines for Program Funding

The following is a list of criteria that must be met in order to qualify for water / habitat quality improvement projects. The guidelines have been developed to ensure overall consistency with program delivery throughout the watershed.

Section 1 - Grant Assistance

Eligible Item	Grant Rate	Grant Ceiling
Livestock Restriction, Alternate Watering Systems & Crossings	75%	\$10,000
Nutrient Management - Manure / storing & Handling	75%	\$12,000
Nutrient Management – waste water (i.e. milkhouse washwater)	75%	\$5,000
Conservation Farm Practices including erosion control structures, sediment control basins, bank stabilization, grassed waterways, spillways, rock chutes, trickle irrigation, etc.	75%	\$5,000
Habitat Restoration including buffer strips, wetlands & rural & urban riparian habitat creation or protection, floodplain & fragile land retirement, reforestation of sensitive lands or connecting fragmented woodlands	75%	\$10,000
Water Well Decommissioning	90%	\$2,000 / well 2 wells per site

* Other projects which demonstrate an innovative solution to improving local water quality / quantity and habitat quality / quantity will be considered for grant assistance

* Grant rates and ceilings are program guidelines only, caps and rates can be changed at the discretion of Conservation Authority Management.

* Please see section #9 for **Well Program** guidelines, section 2 through 8 does not apply to the Well Program.

Section 2 - General Program Guidelines

In order to qualify for current funding the following guidelines must be met:

- 1) Projects must be within the Authority's jurisdiction. Higher consideration will be given to projects that fall within an area which has an Authority approved watershed plan.
- 2) Projects must demonstrate an improvement to local surface/groundwater quality/quantity and/or habitat quality.

- 3) The landowner must demonstrate good land stewardship practices, and be willing to grant access to Authority staff for the completion of the required work and any post monitoring / assessment required.
- 4) The landowner must contribute financially to the project. Landowner in-kind costs may be considered as eligible matching contributions.
- 5) The landowner must complete a water quality improvement application and sign a project agreement form.
- 6) Projects that will result in the best benefits to water quality/quantity and habitat quality / quantity will be prioritized for funding. Project approval will be based on an evaluation matrix with review by members of an established technical advisory committee; final project approval will be determined by Authority Management.
- 7) First-time applicants will be given higher priority than returning applicants.
- 8) Producers who have completed an Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) will be given higher priority.
- 9) Projects will be completed to the satisfaction of the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority staff within a defined, agreed upon time period.

Section 3 – Cost-Share Funding

Approved Projects will receive 75% cost-share funding, up to the program category cap limit. The participating landowner is responsible for the remaining 25% costs through cash and in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions can only account for half of the 25%, the other half must be a cash contribution. Landowner / family member labour costs are considered in-kind. Landowner equipment costs and land value may also be considered as in-kind contributions.

NPCA grant dollars can be combined with other financial assistance programs (i.e. Environmental Farm Plan Program). These contributions will be applied to lessen the NPCA's 75% contribution, and can not be applied as the landowners cash or in-kind contribution.

Section 4 - Project Evaluation Criteria

Water quality improvements will be evaluated on the basis for achieving the following targets and goals:

Water Quality	
<p>Projects which result in the reduction/elimination of runoff or infiltration of pollutants to water sources with an emphasis on the following key parameters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> reducing suspended sediment loads, reducing phosphorus loads, reducing nitrogen loads, reducing fecal bacteria loads, reducing metals and persistent toxins, reduce/maintain stream temperatures (thermal pollution), Increase dissolved oxygen levels 	

Best Management Practices for Agricultural Activities	
Animal Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which prevent animal wastes from contaminating water sources <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which treat animal waste and waste water discharge before entering water sources
Sediment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will reduce/eliminate soil erosion and intercept sediment before entering water sources. Must show direct improvement to water quality, protect aquatic habitat, and i.e. eliminate siltation risk to spawning beds.
Nutrients	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will reduce/eliminate nutrients before entering water sources <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which aid in the use of animal wastes in an approved manner as a soil amendment on crop and pasture land

*Habitat Quality and water quality improvements will be evaluated on the basis for achieving the following targets and goals (adopted from Environment Canada's How Much Habitat is enough, 2nd edition, 2004):

Habitat Quality / Water Quality & Quantity	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will result in maintaining and improving flow regimes, nutrient transport, and habitat structure to support healthy and diverse aquatic and terrestrial communities 	
In-stream Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Project which will result in improving fish migration, spawning and forage <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will result in improving benthic & other aquatic organism lifecycles <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which increase diversity of species composition
Riparian Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will assist in increasing/protecting stream-side habitat with the ultimate goal of having 70% of the subwatersheds first to third order streams with an appropriate natural vegetative buffer <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which increase diversity of species composition
Wetland Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will assist in increasing/protecting wetland habitat with the ultimate goal of having at least 10% of the landuse in each watershed as wetland <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which increase diversity of species composition
Upland Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will assist in increasing/protecting forest cover with the ultimate goal of having 30% of the landuse in each watershed as forested <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will increase/protect interior forest within the watershed with the ultimate goal of having at least one large natural habitat patch at least 100ha in size with a minimum width of 500m <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which will increase/protect interior forest with the ultimate goal of having at least 10% of forest cover over 100m in diameter and having at least 5% of forest cover over 200m in diameter <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which link and connect existing habitat features <input type="checkbox"/> Projects which increase diversity of species composition

Section 5 - Project Approval

Projects which demonstrate an improvement to local surface/groundwater quality/quantity and/or habitat quality / quantity will be prioritized for funding. In addition, landowners who are currently demonstrating good stewardship practices and where the project offers a high cost benefit ratio and provides educational and outreach opportunities will also receive higher prioritization. Project approval will be based on an evaluation matrix with review by members of an established technical advisory committee; final project approval will be determined by Authority Management.

Project proposals are received, reviewed and evaluated according to individual watersheds. Proposals will be reviewed as they are received by Authority staff, and will not be restricted to submission deadlines. Projects will be evaluated against other projects in the same category, within the same watershed / or program area. This program is not necessarily a first-come, first-served structure. Available budget dollars, project seasonality, staff resources, etc will dictate which projects are approved and when.

Section 6 – Water Well Program Eligibility

In order to qualify for current funding the following guidelines must be met:

- Grants are available for the decommissioning of unused water wells only. Oil wells, gas wells and cisterns are not eligible under this program. (Please contact the Ministry of Natural Resources at 1-519-873-4634 for information regarding oil and gas well decommissioning.)
- The proposed work must be completed by a water well contractor licensed by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) as set out in Ontario Regulation 903.
- The proposed work must comply with MOE procedures for plugging or abandoning unused water wells according to Ontario Regulation 903. Details of the procedure must be documented on the water well record and submitted to the MOE by the hired water well contractor upon completion.
- A copy of the water well record must also be submitted to the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) by the landowner or the hired water well contractor upon completion.
- Grants are available to qualifying landowners with lands located within the NPCA jurisdiction.
- Priority will be given to:
 - Hydrogeologically sensitive areas (based on NPCA Groundwater Study or other studies as endorsed by NPCA),
 - Projects located in areas with a high density of domestic water wells, and
 - Areas where watershed plans have been completed or are on-going.
- All proposals are subject to review and approval by NPCA staff.
- Applicants must apply and be approved prior to initiating their project. Projects already underway or completed without NPCA approval are not eligible.

Eligible Costs:

- Licensed contractor and/or licensed technician fees incurred for water well decommissioning (as approved by NPCA). Grant will cover 90% of well decommissioning costs to a maximum of \$ 2,000 per well (limit of 2 wells per property). This is a reimbursement program; the landowner

will pay the full cost to the contractor, and will be reimbursed for 90% of the total project cost after all receipts, invoices, and water well decommissioning records are submitted to the NPCA.

The funding assistance for the Well Program is subject to the following Terms and Conditions:

1. All projects must receive approval from the Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority (NPCA) before they are started. Work which proceeds prior to receiving NPCA approval may not qualify for funding assistance.
2. The applicant is required to submit a completed application form and at least two (2) quotes for the proposed works.
3. Works must be completed according to the approved plans and specifications and to the satisfaction of the NPCA in order to receive grant assistance.
4. Work must be completed by a water well contractor licensed by the MOE as set out in Ontario Regulation 903. A copy of the well contractor's license must be provided to NPCA. The proposed project must comply with Ontario Ministry of Environment (MOE) procedures for plugging or abandoning unused water wells according to Ontario Regulation 903. The hired contractor(s) must complete and submit a water well decommissioning record to both the MOE and NPCA.
5. The landowner is responsible for all payments to all contractor(s). The NPCA will not be responsible for any payments to contractors hired by the owner. The NPCA will issue a reimbursement cheque directly to the landowner upon completion of the works. The landowner must submit all associated permits, a statement of expenses incurred during the construction together with copies of receipts, invoices marked "Paid in Full" and/or copies of cancelled cheques, both front and back. Invoices and receipts must provide a detailed breakdown of labour hours, quantities of materials purchased and all other associated costs.
6. This application for funding assistance is not an application for a permit. The work must meet the requirements of all applicable provincial and municipal laws and by-laws.
7. Projects will be completed to the satisfaction of the NPCA within a defined and agreed time period as outlined in the approved project plan. The owner will not alter, interfere with or otherwise modify the project without prior written consent of the NPCA and other agencies involved.
8. NPCA shall have access to the site where any part of the work is being carried out at all reasonable times during construction and after construction for the purpose of conducting project assessment.