

FUNDING AND ADMINISTRATION FAQs



WISCONSIN'S HEALTHY LAKES & RIVERS ACTION PLAN ([Plan](#)) goal is to protect and improve the health of our lakes and rivers by increasing shoreland property owner participation in habitat restoration and runoff and erosion control projects. This fact sheet answers frequently asked questions about funding and administering a Healthy Lakes & Rivers project.

1. Is there funding available to implement the Plan?

Yes, the Department of Natural Resources created Healthy Lakes & Rivers grants. There may be alternative (i.e. non-Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant) funding available through your county's land and water conservation department.

Please note, Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant funding is not available for regulatory compliance purposes, including shoreland mitigation projects.

2. Who are eligible grant sponsors?

Eligible Healthy Lakes & Rivers grantees include qualified lake or river organizations, lake districts, qualified non-profit conservation organizations, and local governmental units like counties, cities, villages, and towns. Individual property owners are not eligible grant sponsors, but any of the eligible partner groups could apply on their behalf. Shoreland property owners participating in a Healthy Lake & Rivers grant project do not have to be on the same lake or river. Contact your regional DNR Environmental Grants Specialist if you are an eligible grantee and have questions.

3. How do the Healthy Lakes & Rivers grants work?

Healthy Lakes & Rivers grants are reimbursement grants, although grantees may receive an advance payment of 25% of the grant award. The maximum state grant award is capped at \$25,000 and requires a 75/25 state/sponsor match. The individual Healthy Lakes & Rivers best practices are capped at \$1,000/each. The grantee has the flexibility to design their own cost-share rates at a local scale, provided the total state award and practice caps are not exceeded. New in 2020: the grantee can request a one-time grant award increase up to the \$25,000 cap to seize new project interest. All other grant requirements apply.

4. What about technical assistance and grant administration?

Ten percent of the state share of the combined best practices costs is available for technical assistance, project management, and/or education and communication costs. Technical assistance and grant administration does not include best practice installation costs, including labor, plants, and transportation.



5. What is the timeline for the Healthy Lakes & Rivers funding?

Grant applications are due November 15 of each year. Funding is designed to encourage committed property owners with shovel-ready projects. Therefore, each grant has a standard timeline with a March 15 start date and December 31 end date, almost three years later.

6. Are Healthy Lakes & Rivers grants competitive, and, if so, how will they be reviewed and prioritized for funding?

Yes, the Healthy Lakes & Rivers grants are competitive. A team, including DNR staff and county and UW-Extension partners, will review the applications for completeness and consider the following:

- Project impact
- Habitat improvement
- Complimentary management efforts and partners
- Likelihood of a successful project

7. How do I apply for a Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant?

Go to the DNR Surface Water Grants website or the Healthy Lakes & Rivers website and download the PDF grant application. Submit the application to dnrsurfacewatergrants@wisconsin.gov by November 15. Contact your regional Lakes Biologist or Environmental Grants Specialist with questions.

8. What is the individual property owner commitment?

Besides committing to implementing the best practice(s) on your property, project funding requires the property owner to sign a standard 10-year conservation contract, which describes that the best practice(s) must remain in place for that time-frame. Self-reporting and/or monitoring may occur along with the operation and maintenance plan to ensure project success. Please note that local shoreland zoning may require that 350 ft² native plantings remain in place indefinitely.

9. Are there any special conditions?

Some of the best practices have specific requirements if Healthy Lakes & Rivers Grant-funded. These include:

- Property owners participating in Fish Sticks projects must commit to leaving a 350 ft² no-mow zone or installing a 350 ft² native planting if their property's shoreland vegetation protection area (i.e. buffer) does not comply with the local shoreland zoning ordinance. Fish sticks are not eligible on river properties.
- 350 ft² native plantings must be planted at least 10 feet wide either perpendicular or parallel to shore, in a contiguous area rather than patches, and watering will be required.
- Diversion, rock infiltration, and rain gardens are eligible on shoreland properties within 1000 feet of a lake or 300 feet of a river.
- See the fact sheets and technical guides for each practice to learn more about specific requirements.

10. What's in it for you?

If you own shoreland property, you will be able to directly control the availability and integrity of fish and wildlife habitat in and along your shoreland and redirect, capture, and clean the runoff water that may otherwise enter the lake. Furthermore, you can eliminate or prevent erosion that harms your private property and the public resource (i.e. lake or river). If you are a grant sponsor, you can build a sense of community and commitment for our lakes and rivers through planning and partnership. Implementing the suggested best practices over time may eventually add up to significant success and healthier lakes and rivers for current and future generations.

11. What are the next steps if I am awarded a Healthy Lakes & Rivers grant?

The Department will send the grantee a grant agreement outlining the scope of the grant. The grantee has 30 days to return the grant agreement to the regional Environmental Grants Specialist. All Healthy Lakes & Rivers grants have a start date of March 15.

12. How do I get reimbursed?

Reimbursement requests may be completed on a yearly basis using the Department forms. A progress report or a final report of the work completed, including pictures, must be submitted with the reimbursement request to the regional Biologist. For reimbursement forms and an example final report, see the Surface Water Grants website and the Reimbursement tab. Final reimbursement requests must be submitted no later than six months after the end date of the grant. In order to be eligible for reimbursement, all costs must be associated with the scope of activity summarized in the grant agreement. Contact your regional Environmental Grants Specialist with any questions.

LINKS:

Healthy Lakes & Rivers website – <http://healthylakeswi.com>

Surface Water Grants website – <http://dnr.wi.gov/aid/surfacewater.html>

For more information contact your [Biologist or Environmental Grant Specialist](#).

