

Funding Available for Landowners!

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Wetlands and riparian areas are unique ecosystems that perform many important functions in a watershed, including water storage, sediment and contaminant retention, habitat and food for wildlife, maintenance of biodiversity, recreational opportunities and natural scenic beauty. These *Ecological Goods and Services* benefit people, other living organisms and the overall functioning of natural systems within watersheds.

Private landowners within the Vermilion River Watershed are invited to propose restoration and enhancement projects for riparian areas and wetlands to meet one or more of the following objectives:

- Improve watershed resiliency to floods and drought
- Improve biodiversity
- Improve surface water quality

This project is being managed by the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (NSWA) in partnership with the Vermilion River Watershed Alliance (VRWA).

What is Restoration?

Returning a degraded natural wetland or riparian area to a **pre-disturbance condition** or as close to that condition as possible.

What is Enhancement?

Increasing one or more functions performed by an existing natural wetland or riparian area **beyond** what currently or previously existed.

WHO CAN APPLY AND HOW MUCH FUNDING IS AVAILABLE?

- Landowners within the Vermilion River Watershed are eligible to apply for funding
- Funds will cover 100% of all eligible costs including: site preparation, wetland and riparian restoration, associated upland Best Management Practices, annual compensation on land, permits and approvals, etc.
- Expenses up to \$10,000 per hectare of wetland or \$10,000 per km (2 hectare equivalent) of riparian area or riparian buffer will be considered through a selection process, up to a maximum amount of \$40,000 per applicant.

WHAT CAN BE SUPPORTED OR FUNDED?

Eligible projects:

- Must be in the Vermilion River Watershed
- Restoration or enhancement of a natural wetland or a riparian area. For example:
 - Plugging the drain of a wetland
 - Restoring the original shape and soil of a drained wetland
 - Establishing upland riparian buffers
 - Controlling erosion (e.g. bank stabilisation, planting native vegetation)
 - Managing grazing (e.g. fencing, off-site watering, portable shelter)
 - Vegetative filter strips, pervious surfaces and on-site water retention practices
 - Control of invasive and noxious weeds
 - Propose your ideas!

We value landowners' ideas and recognize that each situation may require unique approaches. Only those practices that work for both the landowner and the VRW Restoration & Enhancement Project can be funded.

Eligible Costs include but are not limited to:

- Engineering or consultant fees for design and construction
- Cost of seed for grass or forage mixture
- Fencing costs including electric, temporary and permanent fences
- Plant materials and planting costs including weed barrier fabric and mulches
- Applicant's equipment use/labour and/or contracted services or labour costs
- Contract labour.

WHAT CANNOT BE SUPPORTED OR FUNDED?

Ineligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Projects that do not restore or enhance natural wetlands or riparian areas
- Projects that are already funded wholly by other programs.
- Projects that do not have appropriate legal agreements, permits and approvals

Ineligible costs include, but are not limited to:

- Expenses incurred outside of the Project Term for an Approved Project;
- Expenses funded wholly through other grants, programs or projects

LANDOWNER RESPONSIBILITY

- Care and maintenance of wetlands or riparian areas you have restored and/or enhanced.

OUR GENERAL APPROACH

- Invite landowners to apply for funding to restore or enhance wetlands and/or riparian areas on their land
- Applications are received and processed on first-come, first-served basis
- An Approval Letter is sent to the successful applicant along with an agreement document for signature
- A consultant hired by NSWA does a pre-restoration site assessment
- Landowners implement restoration or enhancement activities on their land
- Landowners submit expense receipts for reimbursement during the work in progress and at completion of their project(s)
- The landowner submits a brief report on the work completed upon submission of the final expense claim
- Extension and Stewardship Coordinator monitors work in progress
- A consultant hired by NSWA does a post-restoration site assessment

FOR MORE INFORMATION – APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINE

The application form and all project information—including additional eligible/ineligible costs and example projects—are available online: <https://www.nswa.ab.ca/content/vermillion-river-watershed>. Applications must be postmarked to the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance (202-9440-49 Street; Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2M9) by **1 March 2016**.

Contact us

Mara Erickson, Extension & Stewardship Coordinator, vrwasociety@gmail.com, 780-267-9658, or your local Ag. Fieldman, Conservation Coordinator, or ALUS coordinator.

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