Coastal Resilience & Trees Fund
Grant Program Manual

2023 Summer Grant Period: August 2023 - September 2024

Applications Due July 7th, 2023 at 11:59 PM

Coastal Resilience & Trees Fund Grant Manual

Overview

The Virginia Outdoors Foundation ('VOF') and Wetlands Watch have partnered to offer grant resources through the new Coastal Resilience & Tree Fund ('Fund'). 2023 serves as the inaugural year of the Fund, which provides grants for projects that seek to achieve increased resilience to flooding, sea level rise, and extreme weather events in Virginia's coastal communities. A portion of the Fund will provide resources for increasing tree canopy in the coastal zone. The primary goal of the Fund is to support implementation of resilient practices and enhance the ability of organizations and government agencies to plan for future implementation of resiliency projects within the coastal zone.

Coastal Resilience Projects include capacity building, green infrastructure practice(s) installation, shoreline protection practice installation, stewardship, and tree planting projects. Projects can vary widely in both their size and funding needs. This Fund is meant to provide resources for projects that may not be eligible under other grants. Additionally, if applicants are in need of technical assistance in completing a grant application, they are strongly encouraged to reach out to Wetlands Watch staff at grants@wetlandswatch.org.

Proposals are evaluated through a scoring system that measures each project's alignment with Fund goals and objectives. No single project category is prioritized over others. See Grant Proposal Review for more information on the process. A copy of the Grant Application Score Sheet can also be viewed here.

No match is required for grants awarded in this program. Grant awardees are able to request the full grant award upfront in order to accommodate applicants that require start up funds for the project.

Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include civic groups, volunteer groups, educational institutions, tribal organizations, local governments, regional planning districts, commissions or regional councils, non-profit organizations, private citizens*, and small businesses* (as defined by Virginia SBSD). Federal and state agencies and businesses that do not meet the Virginia SBSD definition are ineligible.

*Please note: Grant dollars to private citizens and small businesses may be considered taxable income.

Geographic Eligibility

Eligible projects are those located in the Coastal Zone, as defined by the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Program. These localities include: Accomack County, Alexandria, Arlington, Caroline County, Charles City County, Chesapeake, Chesterfield County, Colonial Heights, Essex County, Fairfax, Fairfax County, Falls Church, Fredericksburg, Gloucester County, Hampton, Hanover County, Henrico County, Hopewell, Isle of Wight County, James

City County, King and Queen County, King George County, King William County, Lancaster County, Mathews County, Middlesex County, New Kent County, Newport News, Norfolk, Northampton County, Northumberland County, Petersburg, Poquoson, Portsmouth, Prince George County, Prince William County, Richmond, Richmond County, Spotsylvania County, Stafford County, Suffolk, Surry County, Virginia Beach, Westmoreland County, Williamsburg, York County, and all towns included in these counties.

Funding Available

There is $90,000 available in total for the 2023 Summer grant period; funding is available for either resilience or tree planting projects. Eligible applicants may submit up to two proposals in each project category. Each project application must be submitted individually.

Funding maximums and details for each project type are included in the tables below. **There are no funding minimums.** Coastal Resilience Projects include capacity building, green infrastructure practice(s) installation, shoreline protection practice installation, stewardship, and tree planting projects. Projects can be on either private or publicly owned land; projects that are publicly accessible will be prioritized.

Project Categories
Note: Examples are not meant to encompass all possible projects within each funding category

Capacity Building Costs associated with staff training, staff certification, design, planning, and permitting costs. Proposals should be limited to activities directly related to increasing the organization/agency ability to plan and implement coastal resilience projects.		
Examples	**Eligible Costs**	**Funding Maximum**
CBLP, CFM, MOST, NGICP, etc. Planning and/or design of resilience projects, including consultant fees Development of long-term maintenance or adaptive maintenance plans	● Fees charged for attending professional training, development, or certification courses, and travel to and from the course ● Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants ● Maximum of 10% can be allocated for indirect costs, including staff time and fringe	$2,500/project

Green Infrastructure		
Projects in this category can include new projects, education/demo projects, and gap funding to cover property owner's match for other cost share or grant programs. Eligible projects must be shovel-ready or under construction, and have received permit approval, if applicable. ***5 year maintenance plan required***		
Examples	**Eligible Costs**	**Funding Maximum**
Conservation landscaping Rain gardens Dry wells Vegetated stormwater conveyances Rainwater harvesting Bioretention Infiltration Green Infrastructure Practice Guidance	● Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants ● Purchase of supplies and materials directly associated with the project ● Purchase and planting of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants - selected species should be appropriate for site conditions ● Purchase of interpretive signage relating the project to resiliency ● Costs associated with site preparation ● Community engagement costs (volunteer food costs, stipends, outreach flyers, etc.) 　○ Maximum of 10% of total budget can be allocated to these costs ● Costs of purchasing or renting tools necessary for project implementation (gloves, shovels, hand power tools, push mower, etc.) 　○ Maximum of 15% of total budget can be allocated to these costs ● Maximum of 10% can be allocated for indirect costs, including staff time and fringe	$10,000/project

Shoreline Protection		
Resilience projects that restore natural functions of a shoreline or stream and upland buffers. Eligible projects must be shovel-ready or under construction, and have received permit approval, if applicable. *5 year maintenance plan required*		
Examples	**Eligible Costs**	**Funding Maximum**

Living shorelines
 	
Riparian buffers
	● Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants
	● Purchase of supplies and materials directly associated with the project
	● Purchase and planting of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants - selected species should be appropriate for site conditions
	● Purchase of interpretive signage relating the project to resiliency
	● Costs associated with site preparation
	● Community engagement costs (volunteer food costs, stipends, outreach flyers, etc.)
	    ○ Maximum of 10% of total budget can be allocated to these costs
	● Costs of purchasing or renting tools necessary for project implementation (gloves, shovels, hand power tools, push mower, etc.)
	    ○ Maximum of 15% of total budget can be allocated to these costs
	● Maximum of 10% can be allocated for indirect costs, including staff time and fringe
		$10,000/project

Stewardship		
May include ongoing, routine maintenance within the grant period, implementation of adaptive management plan, or corrective maintenance of BMPs or shoreline protection practices to restore proper function. Funding will go to existing resiliency projects needing stewardship funds.		
Examples	**Eligible Costs**	**Funding Maximum**

General maintenance and upkeep of resilience project
 	
Invasive species removal & replacement with native species
 	
Plant replacement
 	
Resilience project monitoring
	● Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants
	● Purchase of supplies and materials directly associated with the project
	● Purchase and planting of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants - selected species should be appropriate for site conditions
	● Purchase of interpretive signage relating the project to resiliency
	● Costs associated with site preparation, design, permitting, or construction of the project
	● Community engagement costs (volunteer food costs, stipends, outreach flyers, etc.)
	    ○ Maximum of 10% of total budget can be allocated to these costs
	● Costs of purchasing or renting tools necessary for project implementation (gloves, shovels, hand power tools, push mower, etc.)
	    ○ Maximum of 15% of total budget can be allocated to these costs
	● Maximum of 10% can be allocated for indirect costs, including staff time and fringe
		$5,000/project

Tree Planting *Projects are required to utilize regionally native species. Species included on [DCR's Invasive Species List](#) are ineligible for funding - inclusion in project plan is disqualifying.* ***5 year maintenance plan required***		
Examples	**Eligible Costs**	**Funding Maximum**

Trees and shrubs	● Fees charged by private contractors and/or consultants
	● Purchase of supplies and materials directly associated with the project
	● Purchase and planting of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants - selected species should be appropriate for site conditions
	● Purchase of interpretive signage relating the project to resiliency
	● Costs associated with site preparation, design, permitting, or construction of the project
	● Maintenance costs incurred during the grant period
	● Community engagement costs (volunteer food costs, stipends, outreach flyers, etc.)
	   ○ Maximum of 10% of total budget can be allocated to these costs
	● Costs of purchasing or renting tools necessary for project implementation (gloves, shovels, hand power tools, push mower, etc.)
	   ○ Maximum of 15% of total budget can be allocated to these costs
	● Maximum of 10% can be allocated for indirect costs, including staff time and fringe
		$5,000/project

Ineligible projects and/or costs include:
- Purchase of machinery
- Construction of buildings, sidewalks, roads, hardened shorelines, etc. Removal of impermeable surfaces is allowed if replaced with permeable material or converted to an eligible practice
- Purchase of land
- Purchase or planting of invasive plant species ([DCR's Invasive Species List](#))
- Purchase or planting of ash species (*Fraxinus spp.*), due to threat from Emerald Ash Borer
- Any costs incurred outside of the grant period
- Costs for any project or component of a project required for regulatory mitigation
- Branding signage unless such signage also serves an interpretative purpose
- Funding for new staff position(s)

Application Process

Full applications must be submitted by July 7, 2023, in order to be considered for the 2023 Summer grant period. Eligible applicants may submit up to two proposals in each project category. Each project application must be submitted individually. Applications should be submitted using the [VOF WebGrants portal.](#) Alternatively, completed applications may be submitted to Wetlands Watch via email to [grants@wetlandswatch.org](#). The PDF version of the application can be accessed [here](#). Regardless of submission method, all applications must be received no later than 11:59 pm, July 7, 2023. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

Application Assistance:
Wetlands Watch staff are available to discuss potential proposals and can provide technical assistance to develop a native plant list and/or planting plan. Staff is available to assist with application submissions until 5:00 PM on July 7, 2023 via email [grants@wetlandswatch.org](#).

Other resources are available to assist in developing/submitting a project proposal:

- Grant Application Score Sheet
- [Definition of a Small Business](#)

- [Instructions to Determine Latitude & Longitude of a Project Site](#)
- [Tool to Identify Environmental Justice Communities](#)

- Maintenance Plan Template
- Green Infrastructure Practice Guidance

- CRTF Proposal Checklist
- Grant Application (PDF version)

- CRTF Budget Template

Resources can be accessed on Wetlands Watch's [CRTF page](#).

Proposal Criteria
All project proposals must include the following:

- Completed application
- Budget
- Project timeline
- Site photos (if applicable)

- Project narrative
- Category specific requirements listed below

Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Category Specific Criteria

Capacity Building Projects
- Explanation of how the activity will increase the organization's ability to plan and/or implement resiliency projects in the future. This should include a clear connection between the proposed activity and the organization's mission and goals and how the activity relates to future plans. *This can be included as part of the project narrative.*
- Number of staff involved in activity
- Deliverables

Implementation Projects (Green Infrastructure and Shoreline Protection)
- Project narrative should include background information on the site, including resiliency concerns and their effects on the site and/or community, and how the proposed project will address those concerns.
- Project drawings/site plan - a detailed sketch or technical drawing is acceptable, but must include location of utilities, rights-of-way, and property lines if within project boundaries
- Plant list (genus and species, cultivar names)
- Description of site/growing conditions (sun, shade, wet, dry, etc.)
- Explanation of how the project will add resiliency for the site and/or community
- Letter of permission from property owner
- 5-year maintenance plan and commitment to maintain the project for a minimum of 5 years

Stewardship Projects
- Description of proposed activity. This should include the expected lifespan or duration of impact from the activity. If the activity is intended to correct deficiencies in existing green infrastructure practices, the deficiencies and adaptive management strategies and/or repairs needed to return the practice to its original function should be clearly identified. *This can be included in the project narrative.*
- Explanation of how the activity adds to community resilience
- Person, organization, or business who will complete the activity
- Person or organization responsible for overseeing/initiating the activity
- Letter of permission from property owner

Tree Planting
- Project narrative should address the goals of the planting project and site-specific improvements towards resiliency.
- Plant list (genus and species, cultivar names)
- Planting plan
- Description of site/growing conditions (sun, shade, wet, dry, etc.)
- Letter of permission from property owner
- 5-year maintenance plan and commitment to maintain the project for a minimum of 5 years

Grant Proposal Review

There is a multi-level review process undertaken by Wetlands Watch and VOF staff, and completed by an Advisory Committee, who have the final approval authority for all grant awards. The Advisory Committee is made up of conservation professionals from various organizations to help ensure an unbiased selection of grant awards. Grant proposals are reviewed for alignment with program criteria such as:
- Aligning with goals of the program, which are to:
  - Achieve increased resilience to flooding, sea level rise, and extreme weather events in Virginia's coastal communities
  - Increase tree canopy in the Coastal Zone and raise awareness of the value of trees as a best management practice and component of resiliency
  - Raise public awareness about the role of nature-based solutions in improving community resilience
  - Enhance the ability of organizations and government agencies to plan and implement resiliency projects within the Coastal Zone
- Serving a Virginia Environmental Justice Community, as defined by the [VA DEQ EJScreen+ tool](#)
- Involving the community in the development and implementation of the project
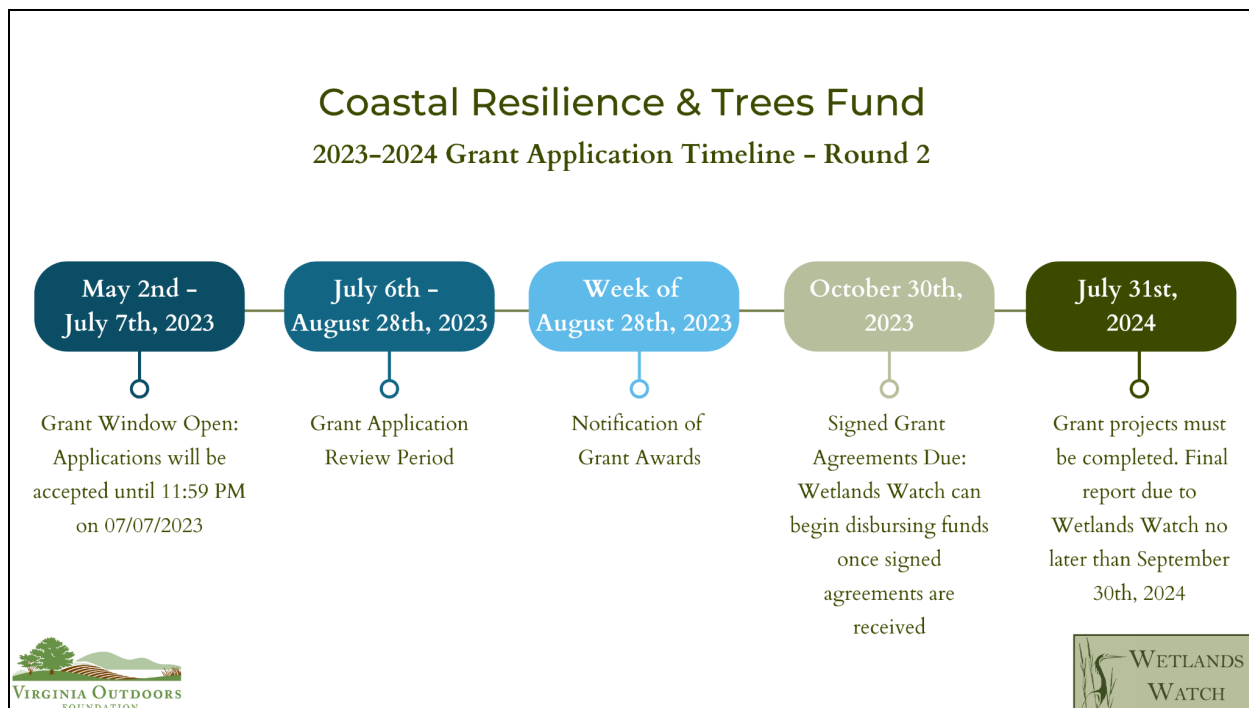- Demonstrating clear and feasible outcomes

Other questions that will be considered during the application scoring process:
- Does the project add resilience to an Environmental Justice community?
- Does the project have a public outreach or education benefit?
- Is the project on public land/publicly accessible?
- Does the planting plan include at least 90% native plant species?
- Does the applicant have limited access to other funding sources for the project/activity?

Grant Award Timeline & Contract Information

Grant awards will be announced on August 30, 2023. All applicants will be notified of their status regardless of approval. Notice of grant award letters will be distributed through email, with grant agreements to follow within two weeks of award announcement. Grant agreements must be signed and returned to Wetlands Watch within 60 days of receipt, though extensions may be considered upon request. Coastal Resilience and Tree grant projects must be completed

by July 31, 2024. There is no penalty for early completion. Extensions to the grant agreement project period may be considered upon request.

Coastal Resilience & Trees Fund
2023–2024 Grant Application Timeline – Round 2

May 2nd – July 7th, 2023	July 6th – August 28th, 2023	Week of August 28th, 2023	October 30th, 2023	July 31st, 2024
Grant Window Open: Applications will be accepted until 11:59 PM on 07/07/2023	Grant Application Review Period	Notification of Grant Awards	Signed Grant Agreements Due: Wetlands Watch can begin disbursing funds once signed agreements are received	Grant projects must be completed. Final report due to Wetlands Watch no later than September 30th, 2024

Reporting Requirements
Interim reports should be submitted with each funding/reimbursement request. Photographs should be included if appropriate. Sample reporting forms are available for review.

A final report will be requested within 60 days of the final disbursement of funds or notification of project completion, but no later than September 30, 2024. The purpose of the final report is to assess and analyze the process, the success of the project, the impact on the community, and to provide feedback on how to improve the grant program and its administration. A final reporting form will be provided for completion.

Project Inspections & Verification
All project types (except Capacity Building) must submit photos of completed projects as part of the final report. Additionally, for projects requiring a maintenance plan, current photos documenting compliance with that plan will be required annually for the duration of the maintenance plan. Completed projects may be inspected by Wetlands Watch staff to ensure that the project matches the approved plan and/or any approved modifications to the original plan. Projects requiring a maintenance plan may be inspected during the maintenance plan period to measure project success and verify compliance with the maintenance plan. Awardees will be notified in advance to schedule inspections.

Disbursement Policy & Procedures

A budget is a required component of the grant agreement. The budget serves as a guide for expenditure. In the case of a successful grant application, funds may be requested at any time during the lifespan of the project following the signing of the grant agreement. A current Commonwealth of Virginia W-9 form must be on file before any funds are disbursed. The entire award amount is available upfront upon request once the grant agreement has been signed. Funds can also be dispersed through a reimbursement process. Wetlands Watch will only issue payment to the grant recipient; no funds will be paid directly to a vendor.

If upfront funds are requested, any unused portion of the award must be returned to Wetlands Watch along with the final report no later than September 30, 2024.

Funding requests are usually processed and fulfilled within two weeks of receipt. Funds will be distributed via paper check through the United States Postal Service to the remittance address provided on the W-9 or via an Automated Clearing House (ACH) transaction.

Funds from any item category may be reallocated toward other deliverables in the grant agreement if there is no impact to the scope of work. Grant recipients should inform Wetlands Watch via email regarding line-item changes that exceed 10% of the total award, or changes that would alter the deliverables listed in the grant agreement.

Grant funds distributed shall not exceed eligible documented costs incurred, not to exceed the total grant amount. Verification of expenses is required. Materials to be submitted to support expense reports may include settlement statements, bills of sale, copies of invoices, contracts, canceled checks, etc.

Media and Publicity

The grant recipient may release information to the media informing the community of the grant award to the project and acknowledging that it has received funding from VOF and Wetlands Watch. All press releases and other printed materials and publications, audiovisuals, and signs pertaining to the project should reference the Virginia Outdoors Foundation and Wetlands Watch or include the VOF and Wetlands Watch logos. Organization logos will be posted on Wetlands Watch's website for grantee use. Wetlands Watch staff can assist with drafting and distributing press releases by request. Please contact staff via email grants@wetlandswatch.org

VOF and Wetlands Watch request that each project site be marked with a Coastal Resilience and Trees sign, to be provided at no cost. All material submitted as support or documentation of project progress, such as photographs, may be used by VOF or Wetlands Watch to promote the grant program. Any VOF or Wetlands Watch publications will cite the source of the reprinted material. These records will also be deemed public records and subject to Virginia's Freedom of Information Act.

Contract Termination

VOF and Wetlands Watch reserve the right to reclaim grant funds or to nullify the grant agreement if the recipient fails to meet deadlines, provide required documentation, produce listed deliverables, or fulfill specified maintenance requirements.