



Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point

12800 Gerard Drive

Eden Prairie, MN 55346

(952) 835-2078

ninemilecreek.org

## Habitat Restoration Grants Policies

---

### What are habitat restoration grants?

A native habitat restoration (or habitat restoration) restores native plant communities, restores wildlife habitat, and includes other activities, such as invasive plant removal, that lead to a healthier ecosystem by growing plants native to Minnesota. A healthy ecosystem is one well suited to function naturally by doing things such as providing wildlife habitat, filtering water, and helping to regulate climate. Habitat restorations are funded through the District's **Native Habitat Restoration Grant**.

Landscaping is not considered habitat restoration by the NMCWD and does not qualify for habitat restoration grants. Landscaping alters land for aesthetics or human functionality. In addition, bee lawns and fescue lawn conversions are not eligible for habitat restoration grant funding.

Habitat restorations differ from shoreline buffers. A shoreline buffer is a vegetated area of land adjacent to a water body, designed to intercept runoff before it reaches the water body. Shoreline buffers are funded through the District's **Stewardship Grants**.

### What goals must habitat restoration grants meet?

The cost share program has three goals, and projects, including habitat restoration projects, must fulfill one or more of the cost share program's goals:

- Preserve, protect, and restore native plant and wildlife habitats, with emphasis on projects adjacent lakes, rivers, and wetlands
- Protect and preserve groundwater quality and quantity
- Improve water quality or increase the capacity of the watershed to store and infiltrate water

### How much funding is allocated to habitat restoration grants?

NMCWD will allocate a maximum of \$50,000 from the total cost share budget for habitat restoration grants.

The funding maximum per habitat restoration grant is:

- \$3,000 for residential sites
- \$5,000 for townhome, condominium, and lake association sites
- \$10,000 for city, business, and nonprofit sites

A 50% match is required for all habitat restoration grants.

What are the lifetime funding limits?

A site can only receive one grant per year. The lifetime watershed district grant award limit a site can receive over multiple grant cycles are as follows:

- Residential: \$10,000 lifetime per site
- Townhome, condominium, or lake associations: \$40,000 lifetime per site
- Commercial, government, or nonprofit: \$100,000 lifetime per site

Is vegetation removal (including buckthorn and invasive species removal) an eligible expense?

Removal of existing vegetation and/or invasive species, including buckthorn removal, garlic mustard, etc. is not an eligible grant expense, but may be used as grant match.

What are the grant project timelines?

Grantees will be allowed 2 years to complete their native restoration, from the time the grant agreement is signed.

When are the grant application deadlines?

NMCWD will have two deadlines for habitat restoration grants. The deadlines for each year will be posted on the NMCWD grant webpage(s).

- The entire balance of the \$50,000 will be available to fund habitat restoration grant applications submitted by the first deadline in a calendar year.
- Any remaining balance of the \$50,000 after the first round of habitat restoration grants is funded will be available to fund habitat restoration grant applications submitted by the second deadline.
- No additional habitat restoration grant applications will be accepted within a given grant year after the second deadline passes, regardless of grant funds remaining.

## How do NMCWD staff review the applications?

NMCWD staff will rank applications based on a scoring system, published on the NMCWD grant webpage(s).

- Habitat restoration grant applications recommended for funding that are \$5,000 and under will be administratively approved, habitat restoration grant applications recommended for funding that are over \$5,000 will go to the Board of Managers for final approval.
- NMCWD staff retain discretion to consider a variety of project types (residential, association, business/city/nonprofit) when awarding funds and other factors as necessary (such as geographic distribution within the watershed, types of habitat restored) when making funding decisions.
- Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted for funding consideration.
- Applications for projects that do not meet other minimum requirements identified in the application and scoring system will not be accepted for funding consideration.
- Applications for projects that do not meet the NMCWD definition of habitat restoration as provided in this document will not be accepted for funding consideration.

## Regulation Reminders

- Grantee is responsible to secure all permits and comply with all other legal requirements applicable for the construction and maintenance of the project.
- Removal of any noxious or otherwise regulated weeds must follow the Minnesota Noxious Weed Law (MN statute section 18.75-18.91) and all other related regulations.
- Encounters with any protected species must follow the Minnesota Endangered Species Statute, United States Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. § 1531 et seq), and all other related regulations.
- Wetland Conservation Act (MN Rule 8420) must be followed.
- It is the grant applicant's responsibility to secure any needed rights or permissions to work on the proposed locations. This could include working within utility easements, city easements, and/or other needed permissions.
- Safe digging is important. It is the grant applicant's responsibility to know the location of underground utilities before any digging with the [Gopher State One Call](#) system and follow their requirement to notify 2-14 working days before digging (MN statute chapter 216D).
- Any use of pesticides must comply with the label and MN statute chapter 18b.

- NMCWD takes no responsibility for any spread or issues that may arise from the introduction of invasive or non-native species that may result from a funded project.
- Any other applicable regulations must be followed.

### Policy Timeline

Upon adoption, this policy will remain in effect for two calendar-year grant cycles. Before the third year, it will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, or adopted permanently.

### Other

Any policy components not addressed in this document (e.g. payment schedule, grant reporting) default to the Stewardship Grant Guidelines and other supporting program documentation.

### Definitions

A **native habitat restoration** (or habitat restoration) restores native plant communities, restores wildlife habitat, and includes other activities, such as invasive plant removal, that lead to a healthier ecosystem by growing plants native to Minnesota. A healthy ecosystem is one well suited to function naturally by doing things such as providing wildlife habitat, filtering water, and helping to regulate climate. Habitat restorations are funded through the District's **Native Habitat Restoration Grant**.

Landscaping is not considered habitat restoration by the NMCWD and does not qualify for habitat restoration grants. Landscaping alters land for aesthetics or human functionality. In addition, bee lawns and fescue lawn conversions are not eligible for habitat restoration grant funding.

Habitat restorations differ from shoreline buffers. A shoreline buffer is a vegetated area of land adjacent to a water body, designed to intercept runoff before it reaches the water body. Shoreline buffers are funded through the District's **Stewardship Grants**.

- **Eligible expense:** An expense that is qualified for funding via reimbursement.

- **Matching expense:** An expense that can be used to meet the match percentage for an awarded grant.
- **Ineligible expense:** An expense that is not qualified for funding via reimbursement or matching expense.
- **Funding maximum:** The maximum amount NMCWD will reimburse for a grant.