



Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point

12800 Gerard Drive

Eden Prairie, MN 55346

(952) 358-2276

ninemilecreek.org

HABITAT RESTORATION GRANT GUIDELINES

Overview and Purpose

The Nine Mile Creek Watershed District (NMCWD) Cost Share Program offers grant funds for efforts that protect and improve water and natural resources within the Nine Mile Creek Watershed.

Two types of cost share grants are available: stewardship grants and native habitat restoration grants. This guideline document covers habitat restoration grants. Habitat restoration grants help homeowners, associations, businesses, schools, and other organizations install projects that restore native plant and wildlife habitat in order to lead to a healthier ecosystem.

Habitat restoration grant funds are available for implementing restoration projects that support one or more of the following 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

Eligibility

Project is in the Watershed

All projects must take place within the Nine Mile Creek watershed. Determine if your project is within the watershed by checking the “Are you in the watershed?” map at: ninemilecreek.org/are-you-in-the-watershed or contact NMCWD at 952-358-2276.

Projects Types

Eligible projects include native habitat restoration, such as prairie or woodland restoration. Bee lawns and fescue lawn conversions are not eligible for habitat restoration grant funding.

Who May Apply?

Grant funding is open to:

- Residents
- Townhome, condominium, and lake associations
- Commercial, government, and nonprofit organizations

Funding and Expenses

Grants are awarded for up to 50% of a project’s cost, on a reimbursement basis for project implementation (see page 2 for eligible expenses). The NMCWD may fund all or a portion of a project. NMCWD will offer \$50,000 to fund habitat restoration grants in 2023.

Grant Awards

The maximum grant award given out per applicant type is:

- Residential project: \$3,000
- Townhome, condominium, or lake associations project: \$5,000
- Nonprofit, commercial and government project: \$10,000

The minimum grant award is \$500.

Funding Limits

A site can only receive one cost share grant from NMCWD per year. The maximum grant funds a site can cumulatively receive are:

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

Eligible Expenses

- Project materials and labor
- Engineering or consulting fees, except for any project planning expenses

Plants:

- Plants must be selected from the NMCWD restoration plant list to be eligible for reimbursement
- Plants not on the NMCWD's list can be used, but must be paid for with matching funds

In-Kind Contributions:

- In-kind contributions are eligible for required grant match. Landowner and/or volunteer labor contributions are eligible for grant match. One hour of landowner labor is eligible for \$20 of in-kind grant match.

Ineligible Expenses

NMCWD staff and board reserve the right to determine the eligibility of expenses. The following items are ineligible for reimbursement:

- Removal of invasive species and/or existing site vegetation, including buckthorn removal, garlic mustard, turfgrass, etc. This work can be included as grant match.
- Project planning expenses, such as engineering or other consultant fees.
- Any materials bought or consultant/contractor time expended before a grant agreement is signed.
- Any project expenses for a project required by a NMCWD permit(s).
- Materials included for aesthetic purposes only.

QUICK
TIP

Removal of invasive species and/or existing site vegetation is NOT an eligible grant expense. This includes removal of buckthorn, garlic mustard, turfgrass etc. This work can be included as grant match.

Project Period

Grantees have up to two-years to complete the habitat restoration grant project from when the grant agreement is signed.

QUICK
TIP

Work may not start on a grant project, including the purchase of any materials, until a cost share agreement has been signed by both the grantee and the NMCWD. **Plan your project schedule accordingly.**

Agreement

Each grantee is required to enter into a Cost Share Grant Agreement with the NMCWD.

The agreement defines the obligations of the applicant and the NMCWD. This includes, but is not limited to, such items as promoting and acknowledging the NMCWD sponsorship, reporting, payment schedule, terms of the agreement and use of funds, cost overruns, and cancellation. The agreement also allows the District access to the project area for evaluation and promotion of the project.

The applicant is responsible for securing all permits necessary for the work, which may include NMCWD permit(s). The NMCWD will assist grantees in obtaining a District permit, if required by the grant project.

Payment Schedule

All payments from NMCWD to the grantee are reimbursement based. Requests for reimbursement require receipts or paid invoices.

NMCWD can reimburse funds throughout the grant period, as requested by the grantee, up to the final 10% of the grant. The final 10% of the grant is reimbursed upon successful completion of the project and submission and approval of a final report.

To receive reimbursement during the grant period, copies of receipts/paid invoices must be submitted to the NMCWD, along with a progress report. Reporting and reimbursement forms are available at: ninemilecreek.org/grants/restoration-grants.

QUICK
TIP

Save your receipts/paid invoices to get reimbursed for grant expenses. You can submit reimbursement requests throughout the grant period. 10% of the grant is held until the project is complete.

Maintenance Agreement

Each grantee is required to enter into a project maintenance agreement with the NMCWD:

- The minimum maintenance agreement is five years.
- For projects receiving over \$5,000, the District requires a ten-year maintenance agreement.

Project Reporting Requirements

Final Report: Within 30 days of project completion, the grantee must submit a final report to the NMCWD.

Yearly Reporting: Following the final report, a yearly written report that includes project photos must be submitted to the NMCWD for the remainder of the maintenance agreement period.

Reimbursement Requests: A progress report and copy of any receipts/paid invoices is required when requests for reimbursement are submitted. 10% of the grant is held until the project is done.

Reporting and reimbursement forms are available at: ninemilecreek.org/grants/restoration-grants.

QUICK
TIP

Add due dates for the final report and yearly reports to your calendar right away:

- 30 days after project completion: final report due
- December 30 (for length of maintenance agreement): yearly reports due

Submission of Application

Applications materials and instructions are available at: ninemilecreek.org/get-involved/grants/restoration-applications.

Application Check List

- ✓ Restoration grant application
- ✓ Project form
- ✓ NMCWD plant form
- ✓ NMCWD budget form

Submit applications as one combined PDF document, when possible.

Send applications by e-mail to Erica at: esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org. Erica will send an email confirming receipt of the application.

Application Deadlines

There are two applications deadlines for restoration grants.

May 15, 2023 by 4 PM

and

August 14, 2023 by 4 PM

Please note:

- The entire balance of the \$50,000 fund for habitat restoration grants may be awarded during the first application period.
- 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.

Contact Erica at NMCWD with questions: esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org or 952-358-2276.

Incomplete Applications

Applications that do not comply with all requirements, including applications that are late, incomplete, or missing application components will not be considered for funding.

Evaluation of Applications

This is a summary of the process of review and funding of stewardship grants.

1. A staff review panel receives all eligible applications.
2. Review panel members give each application a score by completing a [Grant Scoring Form](#).
3. The review panel meets, and funding recommendations are made using the scoring forms and group discussion. For grants over \$5,000, funding recommendations go to the NMCWD Board of Managers. Grants \$5,000 and under are administratively approved.
4. The NMCWD Board of Managers are updated on the administratively approved grants and vote on the funding recommendations.

Timeline

May 15, 2023	First application deadline at 4 PM
June 1, 2023	NMCWD Board authorizes first round grant awards (if required)
Mid-June 2023	NMCWD grant agreements sent to first round recipients
July 31, 2023	First grant execution deadline
August 14, 2023	Second application deadline at 4 PM, if sufficient funds remain
September 7, 2023	NMCWD Board authorizes second round grant awards (if required)
Mid-September 2023	NMCWD grant agreements sent to second round recipients
October 31, 2023	Second grant execution deadline