



Nine Mile Creek Discovery Point  
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ninemilecreek.org

## STEWARDSHIP GRANT GUIDELINES

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### Cost Share Grant Program Overview

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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 **stewardship grants**. Stewardship grants help homeowners, associations, businesses, schools, and other organizations install projects that prevent stormwater pollution to our lakes and Nine Mile Creek. Examples of projects include raingardens, shoreline buffers, and permeable pavers.

Stewardship grant funds are available for implementing projects that support one or more of the following goals:

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

### Eligibility

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#### 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](http://ninemilecreek.org/are-you-in-the-watershed).

#### Who May Apply?

Grant funding is open to:

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

#### Types of Projects

Typical projects funded through the stewardship grant program include raingardens, shoreline buffers, pervious pavers, and chloride reduction efforts (anti-icing equipment purchases, equipment retrofitting, etc.). Contact NMCWD with project specific questions and eligibility. Read about past projects at: [ninemilecreek.org/grants](http://ninemilecreek.org/grants)

### Project Timelines

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Grantees have up to one-year to complete the stewardship grant project from when the grant agreement is signed.

QUICK  
TIP

Grant agreements are typically signed between mid-May to mid-June. Work on a funded project, including purchasing any materials, may only start after a cost share agreement has been signed by both the grantee and the NMCWD. **Plan your project schedule accordingly.**

## Grant Awards

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Grants are awarded for up to 75% of a project's cost, on a reimbursement basis for project implementation (see eligible expenses below). The applicant must provide a minimum of a 25% match on the project.

### Grant Awards

The maximum grant award given out, per applicant type, is:

- Residential: \$5,000
- Townhome, condominium, or lake association: \$20,000
- Nonprofit, commercial, or government: \$50,000

The minimum grant award is \$500.

### Funding Limits

A site can only receive one 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 and Ineligible Expenses

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### Eligible Expenses

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

Plants:

- Plants must be selected from the provided NMCWD plant lists 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 dollars. One hour of landowner labor is eligible for \$20 of in-kind match.

### Ineligible Expenses

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

- Materials for aesthetic purposes only
- 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). *For example, if a permit requires a wetland buffer that is 20 feet wide, and you decide to install a buffer 30 feet in width, you can apply for a cost share grant for the additional 10 feet only.*

QUICK  
TIP

In-progress or completed projects are not eligible for grant funds. If awarded a grant, don't start your project until a grant agreement is signed! A project that is started or completed before a grant agreement is signed will not be eligible for grant reimbursement.

## Grant and Maintenance Agreement

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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 NMCWD 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 NMCWD permit, if required by the grant project.

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, NMCWD requires a ten-year maintenance agreement.

## Grant Reimbursement Process

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Payments from NMCWD to the grantee are reimbursement based and 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/stewardship-grants](http://ninemilecreek.org/grants/stewardship-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 total is held until the project is completed.

## Project Reporting Requirements

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

**Yearly Reporting:** Following the final report, yearly reporting with photo documentation 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 completed.

Reporting and reimbursement forms are available at: [ninemilecreek.org/grants/stewardship-grants](http://ninemilecreek.org/grants/stewardship-grants).

QUICK  
TIP

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

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

## Submitting an Application

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Application materials and instructions are available at: [ninemilecreek.org/get-involved/grants/applications](http://ninemilecreek.org/get-involved/grants/applications).

### Application Check List

Does your application include all the following?

- Stewardship grant application
- Project form
- NMCWD plant form (if applicable)
- NMCWD budget form

**Applications are due Friday, March 17, 2023, by 4 PM.**

Submit applications by e-mail to Erica at [esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org](mailto:esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org). Email the application as one combined PDF document, when possible. Staff will send a confirmation email that your application was received.

## Incomplete Applications

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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

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

1. A grant review panel receives all eligible applications from staff. There are two review panels:
  - a. Staff and NMCWD Board members review government, association, business, and nonprofit applications.
  - b. Staff and Citizen Advisory Committee members review residential applications.
2. Review panel members give each application a score by completing a [Grant Scoring Form](#).
3. The group review panels meet, and funding recommendations are made using the scoring forms and group discussion. Funding recommendations go to the NMCWD Board of Managers.
4. The NMCWD Board of Managers votes on the funding recommendations.

## Timeline

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March 17, 2023	Application deadline at 4 PM
April 19, 2023	NMCWD Board authorizes grant awards
May 2023	NMCWD grant agreements sent to recipients
June 30, 2023	Grant execution deadline

## Questions?

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Contact Erica, NMCWD Program and Project Manager, at [esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org](mailto:esniegowski@ninemilecreek.org) or 952-358-2276 with questions.