



APPLICANT'S FUNDING MANUAL

INNOVATIVE STORMWATER PROGRAM

2026 Program Overview, Rating System,
& Application Guidance

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Application forms can be accessed via <https://nclwf.nc.gov/apply> and are available January 15, 2026.
Applications must be submitted by midnight on March 1, 2026.

Grant Funding Overview

NCLWF will fund projects that employ and study innovative technologies, applications, strategies, or approaches for managing stormwater. This may also include projects that bring a relatively established stormwater technology or approach to a new region of North Carolina. For example, although regenerative bioswales are not an innovative stormwater technology per se, installing a regenerative bioswale in a region of the State where their use is not well-known may be eligible for funding through this program.

Eligible Applicants – To receive funds from NCLWF, the applicant must be a State Agency; a local government unit; or a nonprofit corporation whose primary purpose is the conservation, preservation, and/or restoration of our State’s cultural, environmental, and natural resources.

Construction Contract Date – Grant recipients whose projects have a construction component will be required to sign a contract with a construction company within one year of the date that the contract between the grant recipient and NCLWF is signed. This deadline is mandated by General Statute §143B-135.238(e). The deadline may be extended by the NCLWF Board of Trustees if the Board finds that the grant recipient had good cause for failing to meet the deadline to enter into a construction contract.

Fund Purposes as described in SL 143B-135.234 (c) – “Moneys from the Fund under this part shall be used to help finance projects that enhance or restore degraded surface water, including drinking water supplies, and contribute toward a network of riparian buffers and greenways for environmental, educational, and recreational benefits; provide buffers around military bases to protect the military mission; acquire land that represents the ecological diversity of North Carolina; and acquire land that contributes to the development of a balanced State program of historic properties.”

Specifically, the North Carolina Land and Water Fund (NCLWF) **may fund projects employing innovative technologies, applications, strategies, or approaches for managing stormwater** for protecting and improving the quality of water in North Carolina.

NCLWF staff will evaluate proposals based on criteria developed specifically for innovative stormwater projects. Grant award decisions will be made by and at the sole discretion of NCLWF’s Board of Trustees.

Recipients of NCLWF innovative stormwater grants must agree to maintain and manage, at maximum functional utility, the stormwater improvements installed or constructed under the innovative stormwater project only for the period during which the site is needed and used for the innovative stormwater project.

Recent Changes

New in 2026:

Construction contingency budget line item removed

Budgets will no longer have an option for construction contingency funds. Instead, applicants are encouraged to anticipate potential construction cost increases and incorporate those estimates into your regular construction budget.

Project Administration reimbursements for state government applicants

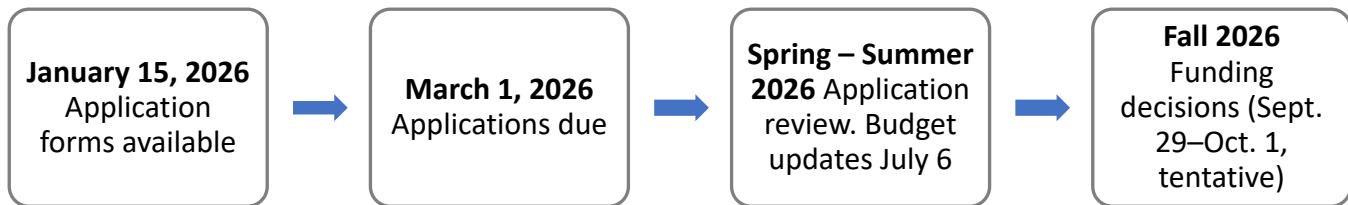
It is still the case that state government grant recipients may not request reimbursement for project administration work done by state employees. However, state government grant recipients may now request reimbursement for project administration work done by non-state organizations assisting with the project.

New in 2025:

Match Value

The Value section of the Application Rating System has been updated to increase the relative value of secured matching funds. Unsecured match, match of type, will now receive the lowest multiplier when calculating points for match.

Grant Cycle Timeline



March. Applicants help field representatives schedule site visits. Field representatives will contact applicants to initiate scheduling.

Late March-June 1. Applicants attend on-site field visit with the field representative who will be your primary point of contact throughout the application review.

Mid-June. Virtual project review meetings with the project team will be scheduled if deemed necessary by the field representative. Applicants will work with the field representative during the meeting to provide updates and corrections when requested. **Final updates are due early July.** Applicants will receive email instructions for this process.

September 29-October 1 (tentative). Funding decision by the NCLWF Board of Trustees. Award meeting date is subject to change.

General FAQs

Who makes funding decisions?

The nine-member NCLWF Board of Trustees whose members are appointed by the state's Executive and Legislative Branches.

How are projects selected for funding?

Each application is scored and ranked per a rating system developed and adopted by the NCLWF Board of Trustees. The rating system considers value of the potential of the project to develop new and/or improved methods, the clarity of the proposed study plan, the public benefits, the value to the state, and the project's readiness. The Trustees may also consider factors outside the scoring system, such as economic impact, in selecting projects for funding.

Are matching funds required?

No, but matching funds are considered in the Application Rating System and projects with little or no match are rarely funded.

Are letters of support required?

Letters of support are NOT required and will not be considered in the scoring process. If you have a letter of support you would like to include in your application package, please speak to your field representative.

How are applications reviewed?

Review of applications includes a site visit and possibly a virtual review meeting depending on the applicant's needs, both conducted by field representatives. Restoration Program staff and field representatives review the applications and use the Application Rating System to score each application.

Will I have the chance to review an application's scope and score?

Yes, all applicants will be given the opportunity to review the scope and score for their application(s) in August and will be required to give feedback on the scope and score at that time.

How will I be notified if my application is approved and funded or not approved?

Following the Board of Trustees' funding meeting, field representatives contact each applicant and let you know if your application was funded. You will also receive an email from NCLWF verifying the funding decision.

What is provisional funding?

The NCLWF Board of Trustees reviews more applications than available funds each year. They award funds available on the day of the funding meeting to as many projects as possible and then designate additional projects as "provisional" to be funded only if the required funds become available through the end of June. Being designated provisionally funded does not mean that you will receive an award or a grant contract; speak to your field representative for more information.

Who should I contact?

Field representatives are the first line of contact for general questions and for developing projects. Getting your field representative involved early will yield better results for your application and later contract process.

To contact your field representative, please visit our website: <https://nclwf.nc.gov/contact-us>.

Innovative Stormwater Program FAQs

What do you consider innovative?

NCLWF defines “innovative stormwater projects” as projects that: 1) bring something new or different to practices in stormwater-quality management, 2) build on experience and current practices, 3) advance practices in stormwater-quality management regionally or statewide, or 4) fall into the category of “local pilot project”, discussed below.

Innovative stormwater projects will focus on developing and applying new information. These projects will emphasize developing representative and defensible monitoring data and cost data, evaluating system effectiveness and performance in field applications, evaluating economic and social benefits, and disseminating findings and results. Approaches should provide for evaluating success in the context of the project’s objectives and explaining why objectives were achieved or not achieved. Be sure to clearly **describe your study design or outreach and education plan as required in the application**.

In addition, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality’s (NC DEQ) [Stormwater Design Manual](#) includes an “**Areas of Research Needed**” section, (A-0), that may serve to identify types of stormwater projects that be useful in designing an innovative project.

Can you fund a local pilot project for stormwater practices that are not common in my region but are established practices?

Yes, the NCLWF Board of Trustees may consider the funding of established, modern stormwater control measures that are unknown, untested, or unavailable in portions of North Carolina. These “local pilot project” applications will likely compete with other proposals for projects that more completely meet the definition of innovation (see above). Local pilot projects do not need a full study design and report but should include a robust outreach and education plan in the local region.

What are the long-term obligations?

Unlike other NCLWF funding areas, beyond a standard maintenance plan developed for any project infrastructure, the long-term obligations of an innovative stormwater grant are to carefully monitor project results and inform others in North Carolina of findings, i.e., to share the benefits of experience.

Which portions of my project can this program fund?

NCLWF may choose to fund all or parts of an Innovative Stormwater Project, given expected match. Common line items in an award budget are design, construction, monitoring, maintenance, administrative costs, and dissemination of results. It is important to note that NCLWF awards are primarily for project monitoring, study, analysis and sharing of results, rather than for construction.

What types of projects are appropriate?

A list of some broad types of projects that would be appropriate for funding under innovative stormwater are listed below. NCLWF does not intend for this list to be exhaustive or exclusive. Further, applicants are reminded that innovation and discovery is the heart of what the NCLWF hopes to fund in this category.

- Reducing runoff volumes and rates.
- Providing alternative water for consumptive uses, reducing demand on potable water-supply systems.
- Promoting infiltration and recharging of groundwater.
- Sustainably maintaining or improving qualitative and quantitative hydrologic characteristics after land development.
- Minimizing initial and ongoing costs, including recognizing avoided costs.

- Mimicking mechanisms of natural systems.
- Operation and maintenance protocols.
- Pollutant-removal mechanisms.
- Effectiveness or efficiency.
- Managing residual materials.
- Removing all pollutants of concern (not only specific pollutants customarily targeted by a type of BMP).
- Addressing aesthetics (appearance, insects, odors), including recognizing value of improving aesthetics.
- Supporting natural systems or restoring function of natural systems.
- Changing attitudes, values, or behaviors.
- Collaborating in new or different ways to protect water quality.
- In general, more competitive proposals will provide or show:
 - Project location and setting consistent with the project's goals and objectives, taking into account the geographic region and its stormwater-management issues (soil types, rainfall, ecosystems, and characteristics of downstream waters).
 - Approaches that lead to improved understanding and documentation of how and why components, or combinations of components, of stormwater-management systems work (what factors affect pollutant removal, and why).
 - Approaches that lead to improved understanding and documentation of relative costs and benefits of stormwater-management systems and individual components of systems. Approaches could include consideration of savings realized by displacement or elimination of other practices (avoided costs), reducing, or eliminating ongoing (maintenance) costs, or recognizing value added by of improving aesthetics of stormwater-management systems.
 - Results and outputs that can be applied broadly, what activities can be conducted to encourage their broad application, and who should conduct those activities.

How should project locations be selected?

Locations for innovative stormwater projects should be selected considering NCLWF's goal for broad application of the project's findings. Secondarily, NCLWF also is interested in distributing innovative stormwater projects across the state, to the extent that it receives quality proposals for projects across the state.

Preferred project locations should have characteristics representative of a geographic area where the project's findings can best be applied (e.g., a river basin, a watershed, or a physiographic region). Location characteristics could include soil types, topography, land uses, extent and nature of development, rainfall, ecology, watershed size and configuration, or uses and characteristics of downstream waters, as relevant to the project's goals and objectives.

Projects may be located on land that is owned by State or local governments, or private organizations or individuals. Settings of project locations may be land that has been developed or built-out, land to be developed (greenfields, infill), developed land to be redeveloped, or developed land that has been neglected, abused, or avoided for redevelopment (brownfields, greyfields).

Stormwater BMP Operation & Maintenance Plan

If the proposed project involves construction and is approved for NCLWF funding, the grant contract will require a Stormwater BMP Operation & Maintenance Plan, which includes a signed commitment to maintain the BMP. The commitment to maintain states that, per the NCLWF grant contract for the project, “the grant recipient is obligated to provide, or ensure that another party provides, continuous and diligent maintenance of this stormwater BMP as specified in the BMP’s engineering design for its intended function for a period of at least 10 years after its construction.”

Project Final Report

Note that the grant contract will require a project final report, which must address the following, at a minimum and as applicable:

- Summary of project goals, objectives, and work accomplished.
- Findings, results, and outputs.
- Evaluation of findings and results (possibly including water-quality benefits, cost savings, social benefits, aesthetic benefits, and fates of pollutants).
- Applicability of findings and results (e.g., special location conditions or circumstances, geographic areas, water or stream characteristics).
- Dissemination of findings and results (how to disseminate and by whom).

Budget

How can the funds be used?

- The funding or match credit for any item not listed on this chart will be determined solely by NCLWF.
- All expenses reimbursed by NCLWF must occur after the award date and be substantiated by invoices.
- All expenses credited for match incurred prior to award date must be requested at time of application.
- Match funding must be for items otherwise eligible for NCLWF.
- See the Budget section Guidelines for details and restrictions on use of NCLWF and match funds.

Item	NCLWF Funds - expenses incurred <i>after</i> award date only	Match Funds - expenses incurred <i>after</i> award date	Match Funds - expenses incurred <i>prior to</i> award date
Design of innovative stormwater structures	Yes	Yes	Yes
Construction of innovative stormwater structure	Yes	Yes	Yes
Project monitoring	Yes	Yes	No
Project maintenance	Yes	Yes	No
Dissemination of results; conference presentation, technical paper, website display etc.	Yes	Yes	No
Project administration	Yes*	Yes*	No
Overhead (office rent, telephone, etc.)	No	No	No
Educational signage	No	Yes	No
Education facilities	No	No	No
Property improvements and amenities	No	No	No
Cleaning up property (debris, structures)	No	No	No

* limitations apply to the use of funds for this purpose

The budget should reflect the overall value of innovative projects to NCLWF: to monitor and study new approaches to stormwater treatment, to document their effectiveness, and to let others know about findings.

Matching Resources - Match must be for activities necessary for the completion of the project and must be backed up with receipts or other verifiable documentation of expenses. Matching resources must be for items eligible for NCLWF funds. For example, overhead may not be counted as matching resources.

NCLWF grant awards may not be used as matching funds for other NCLWF awards. Funds used as match on prior NCLWF grant awards may not be used as match on other NCLWF grant awards.

Expend matching resources at the approximately the same rate as NCLWF funds and in proportion to the original funding commitment by NCLWF. NCLWF may choose to hold requests for reimbursement of project funds if the rate of matching funds expenditures lag behind expected rates. Further, upon project completion, the original funding ratio of NCLWF funds to matching funds is to be achieved. For instance, if a grant award is

approved with NCLWF providing 50% of the total budgeted project cost, NCLWF will expect at project closeout to have only contributed up to the 50% of the total project cost.

Declare in the grant application any project costs that may be incurred before the project award date. NCLWF may include matching funds contributions for costs incurred prior to the grant award date but only if such costs are specifically identified and requested by applicant at time of application.

NCLWF will reimburse project costs incurred after the grant award date - However, funds will not be available until after the execution and encumbrance of a NCLWF grant contract. Funds will be reimbursed only if they were necessary to comply with the proposed delivery schedule of the project or period of performance, are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the project and comply with all terms and conditions in the subsequent grant contract.

Project Administration costs are limited to direct labor toward Progress Reporting, Reimbursement Requests, Project Scope Management, Budget Management, and Project Schedule Management. If you request Project Administration reimbursement or want to demonstrate Project Administration as match, you must submit itemized documentation of staff/contractor hours and hourly compensation rates (salary and fringe benefits) for time spent on project administration.

Tuition Costs may be reimbursed as a portion of project labor costs. For Innovative Stormwater Projects where a graduate student at an accredited educational institution has been identified as the principal employee responsible for study design, monitoring, and analysis, tuition fees included in the compensation packet to the student may be reimbursed to the college or university as a portion of project labor costs. Tuition costs shall not exceed 38% for any individual's total labor costs and shall not exceed \$15,000 annually for any Innovative Stormwater Project. Reimbursement of any such tuition costs as part of labor costs shall be made at a rate proportional with NCLWF approved hours for work on the project.

Special equipment may be purchased as a monitoring expense. Special equipment is defined as equipment used only for research or other technical activities on the specific project area. An example of special equipment is a water quality monitor installed on the site. Special equipment with a unit cost over \$5,000 must have prior written approval to be purchased with NCLWF grant funds.

General equipment may not be purchased without prior written approval. General equipment is generally not permitted to be purchased with NCLWF funds. General equipment is defined as equipment not limited technical activities, which could be used on other project sites. Examples of general equipment include computers, motor vehicles, safety vests, or work boots. If an item can be used to work on other projects, it is likely general equipment and not eligible for purchase with NCLWF funds.

Travel costs are eligible for reimbursement. Travel that is specifically related to carrying out the project may be included in the project budget as match and/or requested funds. Travel expenses may be determined using a reasonable metric that the grantee otherwise uses to calculate travel expenses, or by using the standard mileage rates established by the United States Internal Revenue Service. NCLWF will only reimburse travel expenses for trips shown to be necessary to complete the project.

Sales tax for items purchased by a grantee which is a nonprofit corporation is not eligible for reimbursement using NCLWF funds. The NCLWF cannot provide funding for expenses which a nonprofit corporation could otherwise seek reimbursement for from other parts of the government, i.e., sales tax on purchases for the project. Sales tax must be subtracted from any invoices submitted by a nonprofit corporation to the NCLWF for reimbursement.

Overhead, postage, phone charge, and audit costs are not eligible as match or reimbursable project costs.

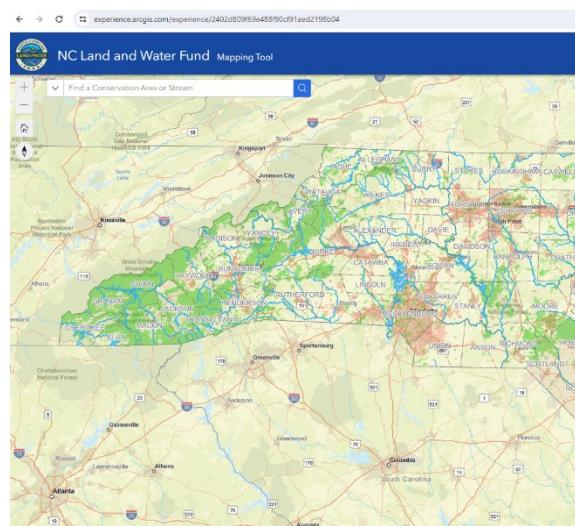
Application Map Guidelines

The following mapping guidelines are STRONGLY RECOMMENDED.

Following these guidelines will greatly help our staff and trustees understand your proposal and the 100-200 applications that are reviewed each year. **Please remember:**

- Only georeferenced PDF, no JPG, PNG, TIF, etc.
- Landscape orientation
- **If you do not have access to GIS software**, please use the [Application Mapping Tool](#) (directions [here](#)) or contact your field representative for assistance.

[Application Mapping Tool](#)



Your application should contain the following maps:

1. Location map - required
2. Project map(s) with aerial photo as background - required
3. Project map/design drawings with topo lines – strongly encouraged
4. Additional property maps as necessary to best illustrate project – optional

1) Location Map. Show the location of the project in context of a watershed, county, or region. This map should orient the viewer to the location of the project on a county or regional scale.

Background: no specific requirement, but should be a neutral color

Drainage area: **Yellow** outline - Include the boundary of the area that contributes stormwater runoff to the project site.

Major Streams: **Blue**

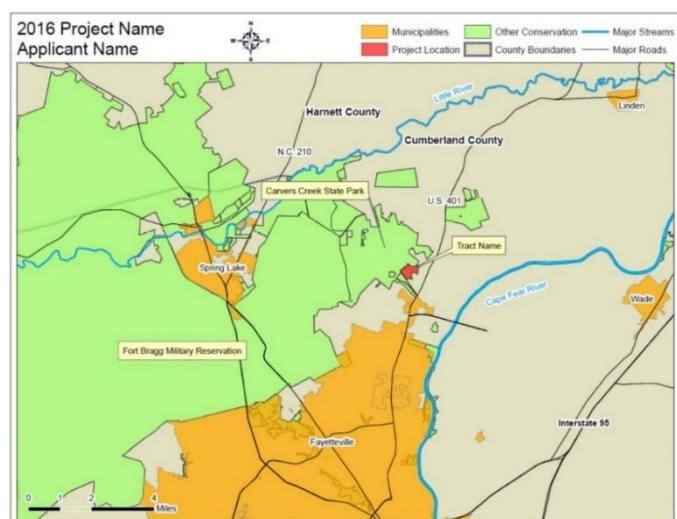
Municipalities: **Orange**

Project: **Red** outline

Other Conservation: **Green**

Major Roads: **Black**, or standard DOT color codes using ArcGIS online hosted layers

Labels: Major streams, major roads, municipalities, and county boundaries should be clearly labeled. Any significant landmarks or other conservation lands should be labeled as well.



Location Map Example

2) Project Map(s). Standardization of this map is less important due to the diversity in project needs. Applicants should include any pertinent information including, but not limited to:

Background: A recent **aerial image**; if an aerial photo is not possible, please use a neutral color

Project Boundary: **Red** outline, no shading or hatching

Property Boundary or: **Yellow** outline

Other Conservation: **Green** outline

Roads: **Black**, or standard DOT color codes using ArcGIS online hosted layers

Streams: **Blue** (use different colors if needed to differentiate distinct reaches)

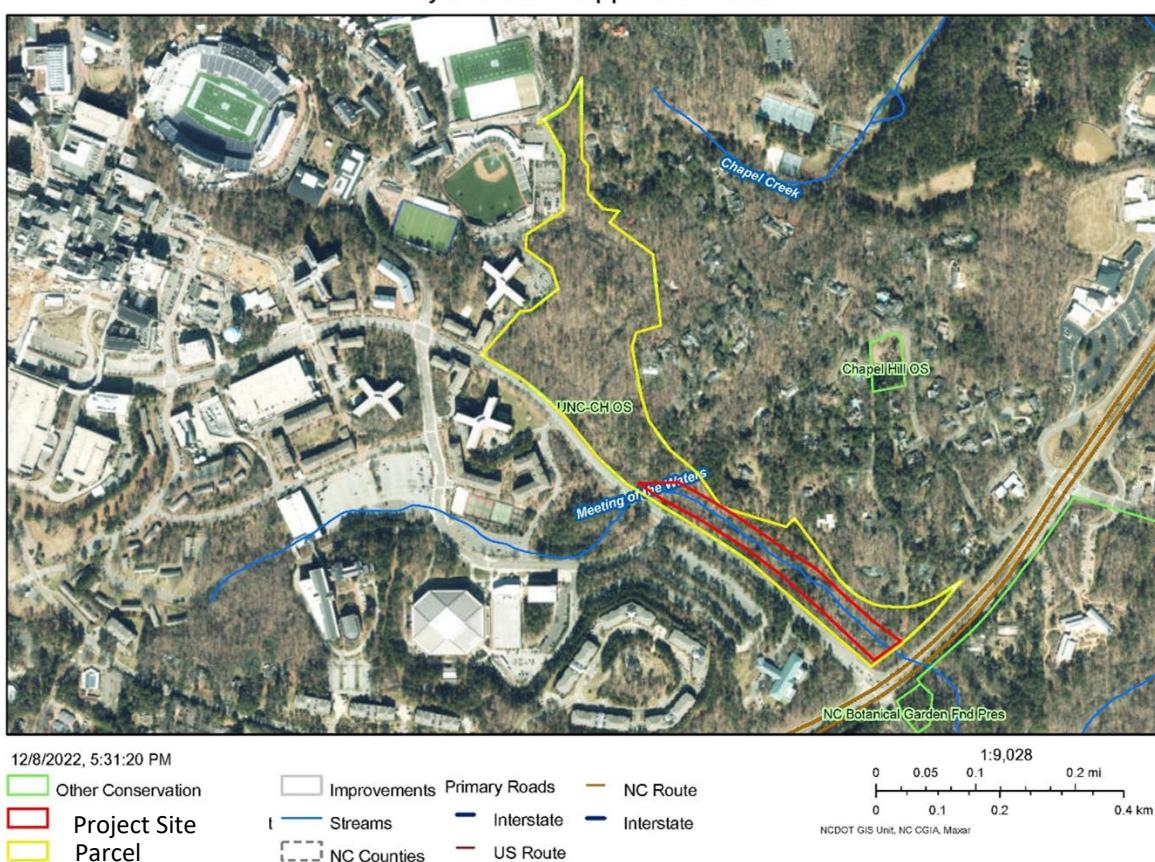
Existing Utilities: If existing utilities are relevant to the location/function of the project, please identify and label

Labels: Named streams, roads, adjacent conservation lands, and landmarks should be labeled

Scale Bar: Please use scale/divisions that are easily applied to the project

Project Map Example 1 – ISW Project Area

Project Name/ Applicant Name



Application Rating System

General Statute 143B-135.242(c) states that the Trustees may develop guidelines in addition to the minimum criteria to assist with the allocation of grant funds. The following rating system was approved by the full NCLWF Board of Trustees at its meeting on December 10, 2025.

Rating System Overview

The major components of the rating system and percentages are listed below.

Merit of the Project's Objectives (35%)

- A. Proposal Addresses Aspect(s) of Stormwater Management that Would Be Advanced by Successful Completion of the Project (25%)
- B. Proposal Discusses How Current Practices Are Inadequate or Need Improvement (6%)
- C. Proposal Provides Related Experiences or Research that Indicates the Proposed Project Type is a Worthwhile Undertaking (4%)

Completeness and Clarity of the Project Description and the Project's Outputs (15%)

- A. Purpose and Goals (5%)
- B. Approach (Work Tasks) (4%)
- C. Output of the Project, Measures of Success, and the Basis for Evaluating Success (4%)
- D. Long-term Care and Operation (2%)

Potential for the Project's Results to be Applied Broadly (20%)

- A. The Project Proposal Indicates How the Results and Corresponding Advanced or Improved Stormwater Management Practices Could and Should Be Applied Broadly (13%)
- B. Activities that Would Be Conducted, as a Part of the Project Scope, to Encourage Broad Application of the Project Results (7%)

Applicant's Commitment to the Project (10%)

- A. Project Timeline and Readiness to Begin Work (5%)
- B. Project Budget/Cost Proposal and Status of Resources (5%)

Value (20%)

- A. Matching Resources

Rating System Details

Merit of the Project's Objectives (35 points)

This section evaluates the extent to which the proposal demonstrates how the project would improve or protect water quality at the project site and how it would contribute to achieving NCLWF's goal of advancing stormwater management practices for water quality.

A. Proposal Addresses Aspect(s) of Stormwater Management that Would Be Advanced by Successful Completion of the Project (maximum 25 points).

0-10 points

- Project brings something new or different to practices in stormwater management

0-8 points

- Project builds on experience or current practices

0-7 points

- Project advances practices in stormwater management regionally and/or statewide

B. Proposal Discusses How Current Practices Are Inadequate or Need Improvement (maximum 6 points). The discussion should include but does not have to be limited to the following:

2 points

- Water-quality benefits and reduction of surface water pollution

1 point

- Preserving natural hydrologic connections and relationships

1 point

- Water-quantity/water-supply benefits

1 point

- Cost savings, including avoided costs and enhanced values

1 point

- Social and aesthetic benefits

C. Proposal Provides Related Experiences or Research that Indicates the Proposed Project Type is a Worthwhile Undertaking (maximum 4 points).

0-4 points

- The proposal should include references to technical papers, articles, etc. that describe the context of the proposed project.

Completeness and Clarity of the Project Description and the Project's Outputs (15 points)

This section is an evaluation of the extent to which the proposal clearly provides a complete and thorough project design and demonstrates clear connections and logic among the project components.

A. Purpose and Goals (maximum 5 points).

The proposal provides a clear description of the project's purpose and goals.

B. Approach (Work Tasks) (maximum 4 points).

The proposal includes a clear and detailed description of the work tasks that will be included in the project activities to achieve purposes and goals. The following work tasks should be included, or an explanation must be provided concerning why the task is not part of the project:

- Project planning
- Design and permitting
- Access/easement acquisition
- Construction
- Dissemination of findings to the appropriate potential users

C. Output of the Project, Measures of Success, and the Basis for Evaluating Success (maximum 4 points). The plan should ensure that the monitoring and data collection methods are effective and appropriate. The data to be collected must be representative, accurate, and appropriate for evaluating performance and evaluating the success of the practices using statistical or other scientifically defensible methods.

D. Long-term Care and Operation (maximum 2 points).

NOTE: To avoid penalizing projects that are "NA," award 2 points.

For projects with BMPs and other features or devices that will operate indefinitely, the proposal should include a plan that addresses the following:

- Ongoing functional operation and maintenance (O&M) addressed by the plan both during the term of a NCLWF grant contract and long term thereafter such that the BMP feature or device continues to function as intended in its design; ideally, design plans and specifications would address O&M
- Managing residual materials, long term, that will or might be generated as a result of constructing, operating, and/or maintaining the feature or device
- Physical and legal access to the project location
- Roles and responsibilities of parties involved with O&M
- Ongoing desirable aesthetic and safe conditions

Potential for the Project's Results to be Applied Broadly (20 points)

This section evaluates the extent to which the proposal demonstrates how the project's results can be applied broadly, the activities that can be conducted to encourage broad application, and the organizations that would conduct the activities.

A. The Project Proposal Indicates How the Results and Corresponding Advanced or Improved Stormwater Management Practices Could and Should Be Applied Broadly (maximum 13 points).

13 points

- Innovative methods could be applied very broadly across NC

10 points

- Innovative methods could be applied across a region of NC, such as the coast, piedmont, or mountains

10 points

- Innovative methods could be applied across NC but may be significantly limited in the number of opportunities for usage due to factors such as aesthetics and size

7 points

- Innovative methods would be limited to a narrow range of applications in one region of NC

B. Activities that Would Be Conducted, as a Part of the Project Scope, to Encourage Broad Application of the Project Results (maximum 7 points).

Points will only be awarded for activities that will be completed as part of the project scope. The activities will be required to be documented and included in the project final report as part of the project closeout to receive final payment.

2 points

- Presentation of findings at technical conferences, workshops, or similar appropriate professional/trade forums

2 points

- Submittal of an article of publishable quality to a professional/trade journal for publication

2 points

- Efforts to remove institutional impediments to broad application

1 point

- Posting information on educational signage, websites, databases, and listservs

Applicant's Commitment to the Project (10 points)

This section evaluates the extent to which the Applicant is ready to begin work and is prepared to provide the resources (e.g., funds, services, equipment, and access to land) needed to implement the project.

A. Project Timeline and Readiness to Begin Work (maximum 5 points).

Proposed schedule for conducting the project that includes a chart or a graphic that shows the planned timing, duration of each task relative to a projected start date, the timing relationships among the tasks, and an accompanying narrative that summarizes the timeline and identifies circumstances or conditions that could delay project completion.

5 points

- Applicant has completed the preliminary work phase (e.g., design, outreach to landowners or regulatory approval agency, and obtained permits)

3 points

- Applicant has already done significant preliminary planning and/or design work

1 point

- Applicant has not done any work yet but will be ready to begin work on the project promptly upon execution of a grant contract

0 points

- There may be significant delays with getting started

B. Project Budget/Cost Proposal and Status of Resources (maximum 5 points).

Status of match resources (e.g., matching funds, personnel, services, equipment, and access to land) needed to implement the project.

1. Portion of the proposed matching resources that are already available and committed to the project: Points Score = % Committed x 0.05

Value (20 points)

A. **Matching Resources (maximum 20 points).** Matching resources will be given a value based on the percentage and type of secured match. Any fraction in the final total will be rounded up.

1. Secured private funds (including bargain sale and donated value) = % of total x 0.22
2. Secured federal and local government funds = % of total x 0.18
3. Other secured State funds = % of total x 0.14
4. Unsecured match and/or source TBD = % total x 0.10

Matching Value Example: In this example, the request is for \$40K from NCLWF with matching resources coming in the form of cash from a land trust and bargain sale from the landowner (\$30K) and an active application for a federal grant (\$30K):

Match source	Match (%)	Multiplier	Points
Secured private funds, including bargain sales and property value	30%	0.22	6.6
Secured federal or local government funds	0%	0.18	
Other secured State funds	0%	0.14	
Unsecured match and/or source TBD	30%	0.10	3.0
TOTAL (Rounded up):			10

Printable Application Sample

This is a copy of the application questions for the current grant cycle. It is provided to give the entire scope of the application and let you see all questions that will be asked as you complete the questions online. **This is not the actual application.**

The application is a web-based form available at <https://nclwf.nc.gov/apply>

You will need to enter a username and password to access the form for the first time.

We suggest using the Gmail or Microsoft account option, or your email as your username. Once signed in, you will be able to save your progress and re- access your application. You can also start subsequent applications under the same username.

We suggest using your email as your username. Once signed in, you will be able to save your progress and re-access your application. You can also start subsequent applications under the same username.

(application form copy follows)

NCLWF Innovative Stormwater Funding Application - 2026

The entire NCLWF Planning Program application form is below. Please use the Save and Return function to save your work.

Formsite Logistics: You must have a Formsite account to access this form, so you've completed the first step! If you did not use the Google or Microsoft sign-in option, please save your user-name and password.

- The same login will allow access to all applications **within a given program** and year. If you apply to multiple programs, you may use the same credentials, but you will need to initiate each program separately.
- To prevent accidental data loss in the event of internet connectivity issues, we **strongly encourage** you to write and save any narrative sections on your own device and copy and paste into this form.
- **SAVE YOUR WORK** with the 'save' or 'continue' buttons at the bottom of each page.
- You may edit/re-edit your form and click '**Submit**' as many times as needed prior to the deadline of 11:59pm, March 1. You will receive an email with a copy of your application attached after each instance of clicking 'Submit'.

Staff will not review your submission until after the deadline.

It is critical that you use the Innovative Stormwater Program's [Applicant Funding Manual](#) as a reference when filling out this application. Referencing the funding manual, even for returning/seasoned applicants, will result in additional score opportunities, reduced issues with scope, contract and closings, and better likelihood of a successful outcome. Please use the Funding Manual!

Budgets must be filled out using this [PDF Budget Form](#). The link will open the link in a new window. Click to download, save to your project files, complete the budget using Adobe Acrobat or comparable dedicated software, and then upload it below.

NCLWF Application Mapping Tool: NCLWF provides a web-based mapping application that may help you create the required maps. The [Application Mapping Tool is available here.](#)

Public information: Applications submitted to NCLWF are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and may be disclosed to third parties upon their request.

SECTION 1 - APPLICANT INFORMATION

1.1 - Organization Name *

1.2 - Organization Type *

1.3 - Person from the applicant's organization that will administer the grant contract, if awarded:

Name (Contract Administrator) *

Title (Contract Administrator) *

Mailing Address (Contract Administrator/Payments) *



Email (Contract Administrator) *

Phone Number (Contract Administrator) *

828-555-1212 x100

1.4 Person that will manage the actual project:

Name (Project Manager) *

Title (Project Manager) *

Email (Project Manager) *

Phone Number (Project Manager) *

336-555-1212 x100

1.5 Person who will sign the grant contract if awarded: (if different from Contract Administrator, above)

Name (Contract Signee) *

Title (Contract Signee)

Email (Contract Signee) *

1.6 - Fiscal Year of Applicant/Contract Administrator *

- January 1 - December 31 (Calendar/Annual)
- July 1 - June 30 (Fiscal)
- October 1 - September 30 (Federal)
- April 1 - March 31 (Alternative)

1.7 - State of Non-Profit Incorporation (if applicable) *

▲ 1 / 2 ▼

SECTION 2 - PROJECT INFORMATION

2.1 - Project Name

(100 character maximum) *

2.2 - Duration

Not more than 36 months. *

2.3 - Primary County ***2.4 - Project Coordinates**

Please use Decimal Degrees from the [Application Mapping Tool](#) coordinate widget, www.latlongdata.com or similar site. Place at the center point of the project and test the coordinates before submitting. For projects with multiple disjunct sites, please list additional locations in the narrative.

Latitude:

This is a positive number, between 33 and 36. *

Longitude:

This is a negative number between -84 and -75. *

Narratives - Be concise and discerning with information, covering key components and background if needed. Narratives are limited in word length as noted below each text box.

2.5 - Project Brief Description

Describe what your project will achieve.

State the purpose of the project, what question(s) or technical issue you plan to address, and what novel approach or innovative stormwater measure will be employed and evaluated. *

0/100 words

2.6 - Enduring Outcomes and Benefits

Describe the long-term benefits your project will deliver to the surrounding environment, nearby communities, and the practice of stormwater management in North Carolina. *

0/100 words

2.7 - Scope of Work Items

A, B, and C below are used in the summary and contract - please be concise and precise.

2.7.A - Project Location

Provide context of the project in terms of river basin, watershed, stormwater features or problems, completed stormwater or restoration projects, and nearest town or landmark. *

0/100 words

2.7.B - Scope of Work List

Provide the measurable tasks that will be completed as part of this project, and any tasks that will continue afterwards (such as monitoring or dissemination of findings). Scope items include work completed with NCLWF and match funds.

*

- Project planning and study design.
- Design and permitting.
- Access/easement acquisition.
- Construction.
- Monitoring; data collection; evaluation of findings & results.
- Develop maintenance plan.
- Dissemination of findings & results.
- Manage the Project in total and report to the NCLWF.

2.7.C - Scope of Work Additional (if necessary)

Add any tasks - ONE ITEM PER ROW that are not covered by the checkboxes above. The scope of work is measurable tasks that will be completed as part of this project, and any tasks that will continue afterwards (such as stewardship monitoring). Scope items include work completed with NCLWF and match funds.

You may add a brief justification, for example: "Complete soil boring and analysis in order to confirm lack of landfill material."

100 characters per line, maximum of 10 lines.

2.8 - Project Readiness

What is the status of project work at the time of the application submittal?*

- Applicant has completed the preliminary work phase (e.g. design, outreach to landowners or regulatory approval agency, obtained permits).
- Applicant has already done preliminary planning and/or design work.
- Applicant has not done any work yet but will be ready to begin work on the project promptly upon execution of a grant contract.
- There may be significant delays with getting started on the project.

2.9 - Ongoing Operation and Maintenance (O&M)

Outline the O&M plan for the project or discuss how it is to be completed.

Elements may include:

Ongoing functional operation and maintenance, management of any residual materials, physical and legal access to the project location, roles and responsibilities of parties involved with O&M, maintenance of desirable aesthetic, management of safety issues. *

0/150 words

▲ 2 / 3 ▼

SECTION 3 - STUDY DESIGN & PROJECT RESULTS

3.1 - Results and Outcomes.

Describe the outcomes, results and products you intend your project to achieve or produce. Discuss the aspect(s) of stormwater management that would be advanced by successful completion of the project. *

0/250 words

3.2 - Study Design

Outline how you will collect and analyze data so as to be able to determine the success of the innovative project and provide a solid assessment of your innovative concept. Refer to the Applicants Funding Manual for information on scientific study design. For "local pilot projects", describe your outreach and education plan.

0/500 words

3.3 - Related Research and/or Experience

List studies and experience that demonstrate that the proposed project is a worthwhile undertaking.

0/250 words

3.4 - Innovative Levels *

Project brings something new or different to practices in stormwater management.

- Project builds on experience or current practices.
- Project advances practices in stormwater management.
- Project is a local pilot project.

3.5 - Provide context/explanation for the innovation level marked above.*

0/250 words

3.6 - Applicability

How could results and corresponding advances or improved stormwater management practices be applied?*

- Results could be applied very broadly across NC.
- Results could be applied across a region of NC, such as the coast or piedmont or mountains.
- Results could be applied across NC but may be significantly limited in the number of opportunities for usage due to aesthetics, size, etc.
- Results would be limited to a narrow range of applications in one region of NC.

3.7 - Dissemination of Results

Select the activities below that would be conducted, as a part of the project scope, to encourage broad application of the project results. The activities will be required to be documented and included in the project final report as part of the project closeout to receive final payment. *

- Presentation of findings at technical conferences, workshops, or similar appropriate professional/trade forums.
- Submittal of an article of publishable quality to a professional/trade journal for publication.
- Efforts to remove institutional impediments to broad application.
- Posting information on educational signage, websites, databases, and listservs.

▲ 3 / 4 ▼

SECTION 4 - BUDGET

Detailed guidance for completing the project budget can be found in the current year Innovative Stormwater [Applicant's Funding Manual](#).

Budgets must be filled out using this [PDF Budget Form](#). The link will download a file. Save it to your system, complete the budget using Adobe Acrobat or similar, and then upload it below.

4.1 - What is your total request from NCLWF?

This number should match your budget sheet total request column that will be submitted at the end. Please double-check before submitting.

No decimals or dollar signs, just a formatted whole number like: 12,340

*

4.2 - What is your total match to NCLWF?

This number should match your budget sheet total match column. Please double-check before submitting.

No decimals or dollar signs, just a formatted whole number like: 12,340

*

4.4 - Budget Upload

Budgets must be filled out using this [PDF Budget Form](#). The link will open the link in a new window. Click to download, save to your project files, complete the budget using Adobe Acrobat or similar, and then upload it below. Budget totals in your sheet MUST match the budget summary questions below.

You may edit and replace this uploaded budget at any time up until the submission deadline.

Do not scan and upload - the PDF Budget Form must be the 'live' form.

No file chosen

4.5 - Costs Incurred Before Award (Match)

Identify any costs to be incurred before NCLWF grant award decisions for which you would request approval of matching funds, including fee simple property purchases. Staff time to complete and submit an application is not eligible.*

List funds expended before award here, or: "No match funds will be spent prior to award."

0/150 words

▲ 4 / 5 ▼

SECTION 5 - UPLOADS

Attachments are uploaded below by individual category. Please name your file based on your project name of [\[pipe:37\]](#) as follows:

Smith_Location Map.pdf
Smith_Project Map.pdf
Smith_data sheet.pdf
etc.

For maps, a georeferenced PDF is requested. Avenza-ready PDF files exported from ArcGIS with embedded georeferenced information are best, if possible. Maps will be displayed in a square format for board presentations.

PLEASE use the map guidance (updated this year) in the [Applicant Funding Manual](#) to guide map making, colors, types, content, etc. The [Application Mapping Tool](#) is now available for applicant's who do not have ArcGIS options. Detailed instructions are in the funding manual - the tool may take a minute to load. Please use this tool rather than upload images and screenshots of other mapping tools if you do not have ArcGIS/PDF export options.

We receive hundreds of map and using our standard format makes it easier for staff and Trustees to understand your project accurately for funding decisions.

If you feel that other attachments are necessary, you may combine them into one PDF and use the 'Other' file upload field. Note that not all 'Other' attachments will be included in the final application packet.

Location Map

**File name should be: Smith_location_mappdf or similar. Short file name please. *

No file chosen

Project Map 1

**File name should be: Smith_project_map.pdf or similar. Short file name please. PDF only. *

No file chosen

Project Map 2

**File name should be: Smith_project_map2.pdf or similar. Short file name please. PDF only.

No file chosen

Shapefile (zipped) - Optional but requested.

No file chosen

OTHER ATTACHMENTS

NOTE: Please upload multiple PDFs as needed, grouped by type. For example, design plans and schedule for work should be separate individual PDFs. If you choose to upload Letters of Support, please keep them in a single PDF just for letters.

Letters of Support: NCLWF review process does not request or weigh letters of support. We encourage applicants to NOT spend their and partner time on letters of support.

Other Attachments if needed - PDF please.

No file chosen

▲ 5 / 6 ▼

SECTION 5 - AGREEMENTS & AFFIRMATION

5.1 - Conflict of Interest Statement

Do any members of your staff or board, or their immediate family, have a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest, including but not limited to any financial interest in the subject project or adjoining properties, or in contracts for services proposed in this application? *

- No known conflicts of interest or appearance of conflict
- Yes, there is a conflict of interest or appearance of conflict

5.2 - Conflict of Interest Summary

If a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest exists, briefly explain and summarize actions taken by your organization. This content should also be summarized in attachments.

0/250 words

5.3 - Conflict of Interest Uploads

If a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest exists, upload a copy of the applicant and/or partner organization's Conflict of Interest Policy and any minutes, notes or memoranda related to any actions or discussion of the project. (combine into a single PDF, no larger than 15mb)

No file chosen

5.4 - Grant Withdrawal

Pursuant to NCGS 113A-254(f), grant award may be withdrawn by the Board of Trustees if the project has not entered into construction contract within one year of grant award date *

- Yes, applicant commits to entering into a construction contract within one year of the award date.
- No, applicant cannot commit to entering into a construction contract within one year of the award date.
- Not applicable: no construction included in budget.

5.5 - Data Use Agreement: NCLWF uses third-party, cloud-based platforms to accept, review and store application materials. These platforms are restricted to staff users only and have a high level of security and privacy protections in place. Current platforms are: [Airtable](#) and [Formsite](#). Applications are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and may be disclosed to third parties upon their request.

Do you agree to allow NCLWF to handle and store your application materials via cloud-based third-party performs?

If you cannot say 'Yes' below, please do not submit this application, and contact your Field Representative for help with an alternative application process TBD.

*

- Yes, I consent to have my application data processed on these highly secure platforms
- No, I do not consent to have application data reviewed on these platforms. I will NOT submit this application now.

5.6 - Affirmation of Application Materials

Do you affirm that the information in this application and the statements and attached exhibits are true, correct, and complete to the best of your knowledge and belief? Do you further confirm that you are authorized to file this application and the organization I am representing has the authority to enter into a grant contract that may result from this application? *

- I affirm the above statement.

Name of Affirmed *

Signature: *

[clear](#)

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

You may edit/re-edit your form and click 'Submit' as many times as needed prior to the deadline of 11:59pm, March 1. You will receive an email with a MS Word of your application attached after each submit.

Staff will not review your submission until after the deadline.

Bookmark the Save and Return link available at <https://nclwf.nc.gov/apply> to re-access and edit your applications for this program area.

Applications must have been submitted at least once prior to the deadline as indicated on your log-in landing page. Sample below:

View your stored results below.

[Start New](#)

	Reference #	Updated	
Edit	14281172	2020-10-21 14:20:04	Ready for deadline
Edit	14281154	2020-10-20 13:25:55	Not ready for deadline
Edit	14265608	2020-10-20 16:33:17	
Edit	14257376	2020-09-25 09:10:14	
Edit	14248381	2020-09-21 14:13:35	
Edit	14248357	2020-09-21 14:08:54	

Project Name (official) *

Project Number *

Powered by  formsite

[Close](#)

DO NOT SCAN OR FLATTEN - Submission must be the 'live' form as downloaded.

2026 NCLWF Innovative Stormwater Application Budget Form



Project ID Number (admin use)	2026 ISW Budget v2.pdf
Project Title	
Applicant Organization	
Name of Project Manager	

Whole dollar amounts only please.

Requested Funds	Matching Funds	Total Cost
\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0

NOTE: Budget guidance from the Funding Manual is reproduced below - please review before completing this form.

GMS #	Item	Requested NCLWF	Matching Funds	Cost
D020	Design and Permitting			\$ 0
D021	Construction			\$ 0
D023	Construction Admin/Observation			\$ 0
D025	Monitor;Collect/Eval Data;Report			\$ 0
D026	Information Dissemination			\$ 0
D049	Project Administration			\$ 0
D014	Addnl. Expense 1			\$ 0
D015	Addnl. Expense 2			\$ 0
D016	Addnl. Expense 3			\$ 0
Total		\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0

Matching Resources Table

Sources of Matching Funds (Name of Org/Entity)	Origin/Type of Matching Funds	Matching Funds Primarily Applied To	Amount	Secured/ Committed?
		?		-
		?		?
		?		?
		?		?
		?		?
		?		?
		?		?
Total Matching Funds			\$ 0	

NOTE: *Please group match by source and commitment status*. One source/match line may apply to multiple funding lines above, as summarized in the 'Match Funds Primarily Applied To' column.