

**NEW HAMPSHIRE CHARITABLE FOUNDATION
VERMONT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
UPPER CONNECTICUT RIVER MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT FUND**

GRANT APPLICATION GUIDELINES

Introduction—In April 1996, New England Power Company (NEP) filed a notice of intent for a new operating license from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for several hydroelectric dams it owned along the upper reaches of the Connecticut River, in an area known as Fifteen Mile Falls (FMF). Shortly thereafter, in October 1996, NEP announced its intent to sell all of its generating facilities in New England in response to a regulatory requirement. As a consequence of the announced sale, NEP and the FMF “stakeholders” (comprised of federal and state agencies, environmental organizations and community groups) worked to develop a comprehensive agreement in the spring of 1997.

The “Settlement Agreement” (SA) called for the establishment of an “Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund” (MEF) and funded through annual contributions from the dams’ owner, with amounts related to the income derived from operating the dams. The purpose of the MEF is to provide financial assistance to projects that will restore, protect, and/or enhance the river ecosystem affected by the FMF hydroelectric project, or that will serve as mitigation for some of the impacts of the project. Additional background information can be found in the Settlement Agreement at www.nhcf.org.

In the fall of 1998, U.S. Generating Company (USGen) bought the Fifteen Mile Falls hydroelectric facilities from NEP. Throughout the FMF relicensing process, beginning in 1995 and concluding in 2002, both NEP and USGen worked with a number of the stakeholders to develop a consensus approach to the relicensing, including the Settlement Agreement. A full application to relicense the project was filed in 1999. An environmental assessment, prepared by FERC, analyzed the license application and its supporting studies and plans. In 2002, a new federal operating license was issued by FERC, which upheld the terms of the 1997 Settlement Agreement and endorsed the Mitigation and Enhancement Fund. In 2005, the dams were sold to TransCanada Hydro Northeast Inc.

New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and Vermont Community Foundation (VCF) receive and hold contributions to the MEF from TransCanada. An advisory committee, made up of representatives of Fifteen Mile Falls stakeholder organizations, recommends grant awards from the Fund for “projects that will enhance river-related natural resources in the upper Connecticut River watershed.” The Upper Valley Region of the Charitable Foundation provides staff support to the advisory committee.

Available Funding—According to the terms of the SA, the dam owner provided an initial contribution of approximately \$3.3 million to the Mitigation and Enhancement Fund in September 2002. For the following 15 years, the owner makes annual contributions to the MEF of at least \$100,000 per year (the actual amount is tied to gross revenues earned by the three hydroelectric facilities on the upper Connecticut River that make up the Fifteen Mile Falls

project). The Foundations announce the availability of MEF funds and details on the upcoming grant round in late summer and early fall.

Use of the MEF—Pursuant to the terms of the SA, the MEF supports projects, activities or endeavors within the watershed of the Connecticut River upstream of the confluence of the White River and the Connecticut River at White River Junction, Vermont, and West Lebanon, New Hampshire. Proposals should pertain to one or more of the following categories:

1) **River Restoration**—Projects that improve or enhance water quality, fisheries, fish passage (i.e. dam removal) and habitat for river-dependent species (56% of available funds).

2) **Wetland Restoration, Protection and Enhancement**—Projects that restore or enhance wetlands (upstream and downstream from the project area) to mitigate for wetlands lost or adversely affected by the project (22% of available funds).

3) **Shoreland Protection**—Projects that restore or protect buffers and eroding river or stream banks within the watershed (22% of available funds).

The “Application Evaluation Criteria,” attached to this application, provide detailed descriptions of the above categories and the ranking criteria that are used to evaluate project proposals to the MEF.

A complete list of projects funded through the MEF is available at www.nhcf.org.

Examples of high-quality projects

- John’s River Conservation Group worked to improve fish passage around an old dam across the John’s River in Whitefield, NH. This project is exemplary because the applicant coordinated closely with NH state agencies, the US Fish & Wildlife Service, the state’s dam-removal task force, the Town of Whitefield and others to develop the proposal, do extensive planning and feasibility analysis, obtain commitments for matching funding, and implement the project.
- Through its Connecticut River Farmland Protection Program, the Upper Valley Land Trust is working with farmers to conserve river-bottom farmland, riparian buffers, and endangered plant species through permanent conservation easements. MEF grants match federal, state and local funding. The project advances land-conservation objectives articulated in many federal, state, regional and local planning documents.
- Connecticut River Watershed Council worked with state and federal agencies, town government, and an individual landowner to plan for partial removal of a dam on a branch of the White River. While this project was not completed, it is a good example of pre-project planning and collaboration.
- Connecticut River Joint Commissions and several other organizations have completed comprehensive geomorphic analyses along reaches of the Connecticut River and its tributaries. Each analysis includes recommendations for specific restoration projects within the studied reach, as well as coordination with appropriate agencies and landowners.

Consultation and Coordination—The Connecticut River watershed has been the subject of *numerous* studies, planning efforts, management documents, and federal-designation processes. The results of these activities provide a wealth of guidance about relative priorities for

restoration work within the watershed. *Applicants are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to consult with appropriate federal, state, regional, and local agencies to determine how their project fits within established priorities or planning guidance.* This consultation should take place **BEFORE SUBMITTING A GRANT APPLICATION.** Key contacts:

- ? NH Wildlife Action Plan – Emily Brunkhurst, 603-271-5860,
Emily.p.brunkhurst@wildlife.nh.gov, www.nhfg.net/Wildlife/wildlife_plan.htm
- ? VT Wildlife Action Plan – Jon Kart, 802-241-3295, jon.kart@state.vt.us,
www.vtfishandwildlife.com/SWG_CWCS.cfm
- ? The Nature Conservancy Connecticut River Program – Kim Lutz, 413-584-1016,
klutz@tnc.org
- ? Upper Connecticut River Important Bird Areas Project – Pam Hunt (NH Audubon), 603-224-9909 ext. 328, phunt@nhaudubon.org, <http://ceinfo.unh.edu/Wildlife/NHBIA.htm>
- ? NH Natural Heritage Bureau – Melissa Coppola, 603-271-2215 ext. 323,
mcoppola@dred.state.nh.us
- ? VT Non-game & Natural Heritage Program – Everett Marshall, 802-241-3715,
everett.marshall@state.vt.us
- ? Trust for Public Land Connecticut River Program – Clem Clay, 413-584-6687,
clem.clay@tpl.org

Other organizations with useful information:

- US Fish and Wildlife Service – John Warner, 603-223-2541, john_warner@fws.gov
- Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture – Janice Rowan, (413) 548-9138,
Jan_Rowan@fws.gov, www.easternbrooktrout.org/
- Silvio O. Conte National Wildlife Refuge – Beth Goettel, 413-548-8002 x111,
beth_goettel@fws.gov
- National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program – Kevin Mendik,
617-223-5299, Kevin_mendik@nps.gov
- NH Department of Fish & Game:
 - For River Restoration or Shoreland projects – John Magee, 603-271-2744,
john.a.magee@wildlife.nh.gov
 - For Wetland projects – Mike Marchand, 603-271-3016,
Michael.marchand@wildlife.nh.gov

- VT Dept. of Environmental Conservation – Rick Hopkins, 802-241-3769, rick.hopkins@state.vt.us
- North Country Council (Regional Planning Commission for northern NH) – Michael King, Executive Director, 603-444-6303, mking@ncia.net
- Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission (Regional Planning Commission for west-central NH) – Christine Walker, Executive Director, 603-448-1680, cwalker@uvlsrpc.org
- Northeastern Vermont Development Association (Regional Planning Commission for the Northeast Kingdom of VT) – Steve Patterson, Executive Director, 802-748-5181 ext. 11, spatterson@nvda.net
- Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (Regional Planning Commission for east-central VT) – Peter Gregory, Executive Director, 802-457-3188, pgregory@trorc.org
- Connecticut River Joint Commissions – Adair Mulligan, 603-795-2104, adair.mulligan@crjc.org
- Connecticut River Atlas – Sharon Russell-Robinson (USGS), 703-648-6682, srussell@usgs.gov

Types of Grants—The MEF will accept applications from eligible organizations (see below) through a competitive application process in two separate categories: “Small Grants” up to \$5,000, and “Large Grants” of more than \$5,000 (with no upper limit to funding that may be provided).

A. *Small Grants* (up to \$5,000) are intended to support emerging opportunities, launch creative programs, or cover the costs of one-time projects or pre-implementation planning in one or more of the three river categories. Examples include:

- ? Specific, one-time projects, events and programs
- ? Project planning and feasibility analysis for specific projects
- ? Start-up costs related to new or expanded programs

B. *Large Grants* (more than \$5,000) are intended to address strategic initiatives and long-term activities, programs or projects that require more resources, take longer to plan and develop, require more time to implement, or affect a broader geographic area or larger population. While we strongly encourage that you secure funding from other sources besides the MEF, the maximum limit for project funding is determined by the total amount available in the fund and the committee will entertain funding large, comprehensive proposals if the scope and/or scale of the project is major and highly relevant to the criteria. Programs may address one or more of the three funding categories noted above.

Multi-Year Funding—Applicants may submit Large Grant proposals for multi-year funding (up to three years). In these cases, applicants should indicate how they intend to secure sustainable, long-term resources for the proposed program beyond the end of the grant period (if appropriate). The Foundation will employ a flexible approach in committing funds for the second and third years of a project depending on the type of project, the size of the request, amount of funding available, the applicant organization, the pool of applications, and so on. If a proposal for multi-year funding is approved, the Foundation may provide all the funding in the first year; provide funding only for the first year and require a status report after a year of work is completed before releasing funds for a subsequent year; or require full re-application in the next grant round for subsequent years of funding.

Concept Paper—**For any grant requests exceeding \$25,000**, applicants must prepare and submit a “concept paper” describing the proposed project to enable early review of a project idea and advice or direction to a potential applicant prior to the application deadline. The concept paper should include a brief synopsis of the following: organization description, outline of the proposed project (area served, objectives, activities, *etc.*), project timetable, collaborating organizations, and proposed budget. The concept paper should not exceed two (2) pages. Deadline for submission is September 30th. Potential applicants are encouraged to share ideas and concepts prior to the concept paper deadline. Contact Kevin Peterson at 603-653-0387 ext. 102, or email kp@nhcf.org to share your idea.

Eligibility—Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, community organizations, educational institutions and federal, state and local government agencies. Organizations must be recognized as tax-exempt under Section 501c3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Nonprofit organizations or community groups that do not have 501c3 status may apply if another tax-exempt organization acts as fiscal sponsor.

Deadlines—Grant decisions are made once a year. Complete applications must be received by 5:00 PM on November 30th. Grant awards are announced in February. Concept papers for Large Grant proposals of greater than \$25,000 must be received by September 30th. *If the deadline dates falls on a weekend or holiday, then the deadline is the PREVIOUS Friday.* In extraordinary circumstances (for special opportunities or time-sensitive projects), the advisory committee may consider grant requests outside the normal application deadline. Examples of such circumstances include land purchases where an option or sales agreement does not coincide with the application deadline, or where a commitment of funds is needed to match other, time-sensitive funding sources. In these cases, the applicant must submit a concept paper and a formal application using the same format required for applications submitted by the regular deadlines. For more information, contact Upper Valley Region Senior Program Officer Kevin Peterson at 603-653-0387, email kp@nhcf.org.

How to Apply—Complete applications must include an Application Cover Sheet, a Proposal Narrative, and various Attachments. ***IF AN APPLICATION DOES NOT HAVE ALL THE REQUIRED COMPONENTS, IT WILL BE DEEMED INCOMPLETE AND WILL NOT BE REVIEWED.***

Proposal Narrative should include the following information in the following order:

[*Small Grants*—no more than two (2) pages; *Large Grants*—no more than eight (8) pages]

1. Organization Description: Briefly describe your organization, mission, current programs and services.
2. Project Description: Describe the goals, objectives and activities you will implement, the geographic area served, and a time line for completing your work.
3. MEF Categories: Describe how your project fits into one or more of the MEF categories and addresses specific criteria within each relevant category, as well as the general criteria.
4. Relevance to Federal, State, Regional or Local Connecticut River Watershed Priorities: Describe how your project advances relevant restoration priorities within the Connecticut River watershed as articulated by federal and state agencies; regional planning commissions; local communities; and nonprofit organizations. (See the list of contacts at the bottom of Page 2 and the top of Page 3.)
5. Collaborating and Cooperating Organizations: List with phone numbers, contact person and description of their role.
6. Evaluation Plan: Identify the specific measurable outcomes or changes that will happen as a result of your work. How will you know your work has been successful? How will the progress of your work be documented over time? How will data collected for the project change or improve service? All grantees must report to the Foundation at the end of the grant period on the outcomes specified here.
7. Financial Plans: For what part of the work will grant funds be used? What other sources of funds have you applied for or already committed?
8. Continuation: If activities will continue beyond the proposed funding period, discuss how the work will be sustained, other possible funding sources, and continuation plans.

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS FOR ALL APPLICATIONS:

1. **Map** showing the location of the proposed project or program
2. **Project budget** with details on expenses and income (including cash and in-kind contributions from other sources—we strongly encourage projects that leverage other funding).
3. **Operating budget** for the applicant organization
4. **List of current board members/trustees** of the applicant with their addresses and affiliations
5. **IRS 501c3 status determination letter**
6. Most recent **financial statement or audit report** for organization

7. New Hampshire Nonprofit Checklist (required only for NH-incorporated nonprofits)

Proposals with fiscal sponsors (if applicant is not a 501c3 organization) must provide information about the applicant only for Attachments 1 – 4, and for the fiscal agent only for Attachments 5 – 7.

Optional Attachments—Applicants may submit other project-specific supporting documents that are critical to understanding the nature, scope and impact of a proposed project. Examples include blueprints, plans, consultant reports, scientific studies or other types of scientific or technical information. In addition, applicants may include letters of support for the proposal (from prospective partners, those who will benefit from the project, or colleagues who can speak to the effectiveness of the organization and the project need).

Copies of Application—A *COMPLETE APPLICATION* **MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:**

- ? One (1) ORIGINAL: Application Cover Sheet, Proposal Narrative, and All Attachments;

AND

- ? Fifteen (15) COPIES: Application Cover Sheet, Proposal Narrative, Project-Specific Supporting Documents, Map, and Project Budget ONLY. To save paper, these should be copied on BOTH SIDES of a sheet of paper.

Completed application packages **must be received by 5:00 PM on or before November 30th** (if the 30th is on a weekend or holiday, the deadline is the PREVIOUS Friday). Fax applications not accepted.

**Upper Connecticut River MEF
New Hampshire Charitable Foundation—Upper Valley Region
16 Buck Road
Hanover, NH 03755**

Have questions? Need help? If you have questions or need more information, contact Kevin Peterson, senior program officer the Upper Valley Region in Hanover at (603) 653-0387, ext. 102, or by e-mail at kp@nhcf.org. This application is available at www.nhcf.org in the “Applying for a Grant” section.