

Merrimack Conservation Partnership (MCP)

2021 Environmental Science, Education and Outreach Grant Program

Request for Proposals

Overview

In October 2021, the Merrimack Conservation Partnership (MCP) will award its fifth round of Environmental Science, Education and Outreach grants in the Merrimack Valley Watershed region of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. The MCP has \$20,000 to re-grant in 2021. The grant program is privately funded and administered by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests on behalf of the Merrimack Conservation Partnership.

The Merrimack Conservation Partnership is a regional conservation alliance formed to protect the southern portion of the greater Merrimack River watershed in New Hampshire and Massachusetts through accelerated land and water protection, advocacy, restoration, outreach and education. The Partnership works by supporting and fostering collaboration, coordination, and innovation among partner organizations to strengthen our individual and collective efforts toward achieving the shared goal of a clean, healthy Merrimack River.

In 2010, the Merrimack was identified by the US Forest Service as the most threatened watershed in the nation in terms of private forestland loss over the next 20 years. The two-state region of the Merrimack Watershed spans a total of 2.1 million acres and 3,275 square miles, of which 54% is in NH and 46% in Massachusetts. The Merrimack River starts in Franklin, NH and flows through eight of NH's largest cities. The river continues into Massachusetts to its mouth in Newburyport.

Before applying for an MCP grant, please carefully review this RFP and the application materials. For more information on the Merrimack Valley Regional Conservation Plan, grant application materials, maps, a list of towns in the region, etc., visit the "Grants" section of www.merrimackconservationpartnership.org. If you need help determining whether your project is eligible for funding, please call Brian Hotz at (603) 224-9945 or email bhotz@forestsociety.org.

Grant Amounts/Match Requirements

Maximum grant amount per applicant is \$5,000. Applicants may only apply for one grant per year.

The MCP grants program has a "cash" match requirement. All applicants must provide matching funds of a minimum of 25% of the grant award. Cash match does not include any "in-kind" gifts.

The MCP grants program also strongly encourages applicants to report "non-cash" match in the form of volunteer labor and other in-kind contributions. "Non-cash" match may consist of any funds and the value of materials and services donated in kind. The value of volunteer labor

should also be counted as “non-cash” match. For the 2021 grant year, unskilled volunteer labor is rated at \$18.58/hour and skilled volunteer labor is at fair market value. Grantees must be able to document and justify volunteer skilled labor value.

Labor provided by employees of the applicant organization and/or partners (i.e. town or government employees, public agency employees, non-profit org. employees, etc.) may be credited at their wages as cash match.

What Can Grants be Used For?

🌿 To help fund environmental science, education and outreach activities related directly to the Merrimack River or its watershed. Funds can be used for activities such as:

- Youth or public environmental educational activities
- Development of outreach & educational materials
- River clean ups
- Water quality testing & monitoring activities
- Others...

Who Can Apply For and Receive Funding?

🌿 Nonprofit tax exempt 501(c)(3) organizations, state or county agencies, or local government departments that have land conservation, environmental education, or another environmental focus.

How Will Projects Be Selected?

- 🌿 All grant applications will be reviewed by the MCP Steering Committee.
- 🌿 Eligible activities must be located in the Merrimack Valley Watershed region of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. See list of towns to determine whether your project is eligible to apply.
- 🌿 The activity must directly relate to the Merrimack River or its watershed.
- 🌿 The activity should be completed within 1.5 years from the date of the grant award. *(Expenses incurred before January 1, 2021 are not eligible for funding through this grant round.)*
- 🌿 Applicants must explain their capacity and financial ability to complete the proposed activities.
- 🌿 Applicants must meet a cash match requirement of 25% of the grant award.

Grant Payments:

All MCP grants are paid on a reimbursement basis. Grantees must incur costs for work actually completed. At project completion, the grantee will submit a request for reimbursement along with a final budget reflecting eligible and non-eligible expenses, including cash match expenses, and attach any cashed checks and/or paid-in-full receipts. Staff salaries do not require

cashed checks or receipts, but should be shown on the budget. Your itemized invoice should also be accompanied by a cover letter stating that the project has been completed or implemented; and a short 1-2 page report should be provided detailing outcomes, findings, lessons learned, or documentation of materials created. Expenses and items may not be reimbursed if they are not included in the original project proposal and budget. No partial reimbursements will be made.

Application Deadline

Completed applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 15, 2021.

Completed applications may be submitted electronically to ccolton@forestsociety.org.

Completed applications may also be sent by mail, and **must be postmarked no later than**

September 15, 2021. Mail applications to: Connie Colton, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301. Successful grant applicants will be notified by **October 30, 2021.** For questions regarding the grant program and the application process, please contact: Brian Hotz at (603) 224-9945 ext. 316 or bhotz@forestsociety.org.

The Merrimack Conservation Partnership Grants program is privately funded and administered by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests on behalf of the Merrimack Conservation Partnership.

The Merrimack Conservation Partnership reserves the right to modify this and other application materials in future grant rounds, based on experience gained from administering the program, changes in funding and/or legal requirements.