Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Program

Financial Assistance Guidelines

September 2026

HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

Hamilton Conservation Authority

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A completed rain garden in urban Hamilton.



Farmers discussing best management practices.

1.0 BACKGROUND

Private property owners play a critical role in managing their lands and working towards the Hamilton Conservation Authority's (HCA) vision of a 'healthy watershed for everyone'.

In 1994, the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, Conservation Halton and the Bay Area Restoration Council, developed the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program. The program has evolved over time, and the now Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program (HWSP) continues to support private property owners in their efforts to conserve, protect and enhance privately-owned natural areas, with free on-site consultations, technical advice, and financial assistance through the delivery of the Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Program (WQHIP).

The HWSP works with landowners to help them understand, develop and implement eligible project types as detailed in the WQHIP Guidelines. The main goal of the WQHIP is to provide technical assistance and financial cost-share incentives to support eligible land management projects that private landowners undertake on their properties to improve or restore surface and ground water quality, biodiversity, and fish and wildlife habitat. The HWSP funds a wide variety of projects, including many best management practices recommended by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness (OMAFA).



Before and after photos of a livestock restriction fencing project in Spencer Creek.

2.0 WQHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible to apply for financial assistance:

2.1. The applicant must be:

- A resident of Ontario, and
- A registered owner of a property within the HCA watershed (see Appendix A for map) or
- A property tenant with written approval of the registered owner (co-signer).

A partnership or corporation controlled by Ontario residents can be considered an applicant.

2.2. Where applicable, completion of a 4th or 5th edition Environmental Farm Plan is strongly encouraged and will be given priority in the ranking of applications.

2.3. The project being proposed must include the adoption of land management practices, or implementation of measures, to improve existing water quality impairments, or enhance or create fish or wildlife habitat, and/or through the upgrading or removal of existing structures. Eligibility requirements are further specified in section 3.1 and Appendix B.

2.4. Applicants may be eligible to access other funds for water quality improvement and habitat enhancement projects through other Federal, Provincial or Municipal programs. WQHIP funds can be utilized as either the main source of funding or to complement other funding sources. The total grants from all sources combined are not to exceed 100% of total expenses.

2.5. The proposed project must not have been ordered to be completed by a governing authority, including, but not limited to, the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority, any municipality provincial ministry or federal department.

NOTE: Although the HCA and the HWSP may provide technical information and recommendations, it is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that any projects or practices implemented are suitable for the applicant's property, and technically and structurally adequate. Neither the members of the HCA, the HWSP or the Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) are liable for any loss arising from the use of any advice or information provided as part of or under this program.



This site (captured on air photo in 2015 at left) with assistance from the HWSP, planted a variety of native trees and shrubs, thereby enhancing the woodland buffer (photo at right, 2025).

3.0 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK

Grant rates and caps vary between types of projects as outlined below (Table 1). For specific project details, please refer to the individual project guidelines in Appendix B.

This list of projects is not all-inclusive and the HWSP welcomes hearing from applicants about management practices and restoration projects that align with goals of the WQHIP for funding consideration.

Note that landowners may apply for funding from multiple project types in a single year and may reapply over multiple years as needed (and is encouraged for certain categories). Landowners may also apply to external funding sources to stack grant opportunities. Total grant(s) received cannot exceed cost of project(s).

3.1. HWSP WQHIP Grant Rates and Caps

Table 1 - Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Projects

Project Type	Description	Grant Rate and Cap
Alternative Watering Systems	To improve water quality by restricting livestock access to watercourses and surface waters. Eligible Project Types: Nose Pumps, Solar Pumps, Troughs, Gravity Systems	**75% up to $5,000**
Rural Runoff Diversion	To reduce the amount of contaminated runoff from manure storages and Outdoor Confinement Areas (as defined by OMAFA) by diverting stormwater away from sources of contamination to a satisfactory outlet. Eligible Project Types: Eavestroughs, Berms/Ditches, Permanently Vegetated Areas/Vegetated Filter Strip, Roofed Outdoor Confinement Areas	**75% up to $5,000**
Watercourse Access Restriction	To prevent livestock and/machinery from crossing/accessing watercourses that are in environmentally sensitive areas. Eligible Project Types: Improved/replaced/new creek crossings for livestock and/or machinery, Exclusion Fencing, Clear Span Bridges, Culverts or Bed Level Crossings	**75% up to $,10,000 ($18/metre of fencing)**
Erosion Control	To control or remediate existing soil erosion impairments that impact surface water quality or soil quality and/or fish and wildlife habitat. Eligible Project Types: • Conservation tillage – including residue management, no-till and mulch tillage • Contour cropping • New cover crops • Grassed waterways • Water and sediment control basins (WASCoBs) • Riparian buffer strips	**75% up to $5,000 Cover Crops: Approved fields paid an incentive of $100 per acre up to 30 acres**

Project Type	Description	Grant Rate and Cap
Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitat Enhancements	To restore or enhance terrestrial (land based) and/or aquatic (water based) habitats. Eligible Project Types: • Seeding, planting, or live staking of native plant species • Habitat features (e.g., turtle nesting bed, osprey platform, snake hibernaculum) • Prairie burns/controlled burns • Watercourse or stream channel restoration/enhancements • Streambank stabilization • Wetland creation	**Terrestrial - 75% up to $5,000** **Aquatic- 75% up to $10,000**
Invasive Species Management	To remove or manage non-native invasive plant species. Eligible Project Types • Terrestrial or aquatic invasive species removal • Herbicide applications • Manual removals of herbaceous or shrubby invasive plant species • Mechanical removals using machinery such as forestry mulchers, chainsaws, or other approved methods	**75% up to $5,000**
Hazardous Storage	To prevent contamination of ground and/or surface water by hazardous products by upgrading existing facilities. Eligible Project Types: Chemical, Fertilizer, Fuel or Pesticide Storages	**75% up to $3,000**

Project Type	Description	Grant Rate and Cap
In-Stream Barrier Mitigation	To restore or enhance aquatic habitat through the remediation of an existing impairment to fish habitat. Impairments may include, but are not limited to, online ponds, dams, culverts, etc. Eligible Project Types: • Bypass Channel installation • Dam Removal • Debris Removal • Culvert Retrofit • Online Pond Mitigation	**75% up to $10,000**
Manure, Milkhouse and Wastewater Management	To prevent contamination of surface and groundwater during the storage and composting of manure, milkhouse wastewater and/or raw organic materials (e.g. fruit and vegetable waste, deadstock) and to encourage manure handling and spreading best management practices. Eligible Project Types: • Roofed solid manure storages with runoff containment • Unroofed solid manure storages with runoff containment or treatment • Concrete/steel liquid manure storage tanks with/without covers • Milking centre improvements • Waste water – treatment	**Manure storage – 75% up to $20,000** **Milking centre washwater treatment and disposal: 75% up to $5,000.** ***eligibility to scale** **Nutrient management Plan (NMP)** **Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS)** **NMP – 75% up to $3,000** **NMS – 75% up to $2,000**

Project Type	Description	Grant Rate and Cap
Stormwater Low Impact Development	To reduce the volume and improve the quality of stormwater runoff flowing into the municipal sewer system, local watercourses or designated natural areas. Eligible Project Types: RESIDENTIAL - • Downspout disconnection (per downspout) • Rain Garden • Rain Barrel INSTITUTIONAL/COMMERCIAL – • Stormwater Landscaping	**See appendix for rate and cap breakdown**
Technical Studies	Certain technical studies, assessments and plans may be supported where they are required to inform the design and implementation of water quality and habitat improvement projects. This may include, but is not limited to: • Fluvial geomorphological investigations • Managed Forest Plan (MFP) • Habitat assessment & species inventory Restoration design • Invasive species management plans • Erosion and sediment evaluation • Culvert and barrier assessment	**Aquatic – 75% up to $5,000** **Terrestrial – 75% up to $2500** **MFP - 75% up to $500**

3.2. Eligible Costs

Applicants are eligible to apply for financial assistance towards the costs associated with the design and implementation of the discussed project. Generally, applicants are eligible to apply for financial support for the following project costs:

- Purchased materials and supplies (including but not limited to, plant material, soil, mulch, landscape fabric, tree shelters, etc.)
- Equipment rentals
- Professional design, consulting and construction fees
- Fees for supervision and inspection.

3.3. Ineligible Costs

The following costs are not considered eligible for financial assistance, including, but not limited to:

- Tools
- Farm equipment
- Mileage
- In-kind contributions such as time, labour and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents or the applicant's business
- NEW agricultural/business operations, new buildings, additions to homes, or building expansions to increase herd capacity
- HST if the applicant is entitled to an HST rebate.

3.4. Limitations of Funding

- Any applicant who proceeds with a project before it has been approved by the Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC) and HWSP has no assurance that financial assistance will be provided.
- An applicant must specify the program year in which the project will be completed. If the project cannot be completed within the specified year the grant may not be available. However, the applicant may request a deferral in writing to HWSP staff for consideration of an extension.
- If the final project costs submitted for reimbursement by the applicant exceeds the proposed project budget, the grant rate and cap noted in the formal acceptance of the project stands. If the final project costs submitted by applicant are less than the proposed costs, the grant rate applied in the formal acceptance of the project will be applied to the lower cost.
- The PTAC and HWSP may restrict the number of grants available to meet local priorities and budgets.
- Once the annual Water Quality and Habitat Improvement Program budget has been committed, no further approvals will be given.

4.0 WQHIP GRANT APPLICATION, REVIEW, AND AWARD PROCESS

There are three steps in the process of developing a project. These include filling in the grant application. This process can be completed by the landowner or with assistance from HCA stewardship staff. The application review process begins internally with program staff and via correspondence with the applicant to ensure a complete application. These are then reviewed by a Project Technical Advisory Committee and recommendation for awarding the grant money. The money then is provided subject to this process. The following describes the process and steps for developing and implementing a project with support from WQHIP.

4.1. The applicant contacts HCA requesting onsite consultation with the HWSP technician.

4.2. A site visit occurs with the applicant and HWSP technician. HWSP technician confirms project eligibility and acquires before photos of the proposed project.

4.3. After this consultation the applicant submits their project application to the HWSP for review.

4.4. The HWSP technician consults with other HCA staff with expertise relevant to the project as required and may ask applicants for additional information or clarification to complete the application.

4.5. Some proposals may require additional review/approvals by one of more of the following: Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Conservation Authority, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or the respective Municipality. HWSP staff can assist landowners with connecting to the applicable agency.

4.6. HWSP staff present grant applications anonymously to the Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC). The PTAC determines a projects' merit to receive financial assistance.

4.7. Funding is allocated on a merit basis. Project merit is assessed based on the following considerations:

- Does the project directly address, or contribute to improving a water quality impairment?
- Does the project directly address, or contribute to improving habitat?
- Does the property owner demonstrate environmentally conscious land management practices?
- Is the project located adjacent to, or in close proximity to a wetland, grassland/prairie, forest or other significant natural area?
- Does the project support a designated Species at Risk?
- Does the project raise public awareness of water quality and habitat issues or

opportunities?

- Has the applicant provided in-kind or financial contribution towards the project and committed to the maintenance of the project?
- Projects assessed to have the highest merit will be funded. Depending on the number of applications received and the available WQHIP funding each year, it is possible that not all projects having merit will be funded.

4.8. Applicants will be notified by HWSP staff as to whether their project has been awarded a grant following the PTAC project evaluation process. Funding may be conditional on changes to the project plan as requested by PTAC.

4.9. Grant approval is based on the design and project costs submitted in the original application. Any design or budget changes to the project post funding approval must be submitted to the HWSP for review to determine if the proposed project will still be eligible for the grant.

4.10. The project will be processed for grant payment once:

- The project has been completed.
- Copies of all relevant invoices, paid receipts, cancelled cheques, certificates and permits have been received by the Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program.
- Post management/project completion photographs have been taken by stewardship staff.

4.11. The applicant must:

- Contact HWSP staff to arrange an on-site consultation, so HWSP staff can verify the proposed project meets the eligibility requirements.
- Complete and submit a WQHIP project application form prior to the works commencing (retroactive applications MAY be considered provided the proposed project meets eligibility requirements).
- First drafts of applications are due by October 15th annually. This allows time for HWSP to provide comments and review prior to submitting a final copy by the December 1st submission deadline.
- Complete all utility locates.
- Obtain all necessary approvals or permits (including neighbouring properties if applicable).
- Ensure that all proposed structures or land practices meet all zoning, technical, structural and legal requirements where applicable, including, but not limited to: Canada Farm Building Code, Ontario Building Code, Provincial Acts, Provincial and Municipal highway setbacks, Municipal official plans and by-laws, and Conservation Authority regulations (facilitated by HWSP staff), and
- Allow HWSP and other relevant agency staff on site to confirm project completion, by November 15th of the project implementation year. The applicant must provide all relevant receipts or proof of payment for materials or items purchased and copies of supporting cancelled cheques or proof of financing to receive reimbursement.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

5.1. The Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program (HWSP):

- Establishes the WQHIP Project Guidelines with assistance from PTAC and partners and regularly reviews and evaluates the financial assistance framework to ensure the program is properly administered and the financial assistance available aligns with the goals of the WQHIP.
- Ensures that information on the administration of the program is available to all potential applicants.
- Provides information to landowners regarding conservation, land management and stewardship practices and measures that may qualify for grants.
- Conducts site visits to evaluate the potential sources, pathways, and magnitude of water quality impairment or potential for habitat creation.
- Provides management and remedial options to reduce pollution potential from identified sources.
- Ensures the anonymity of project applicants when funding applications/project proposals are presented to PTAC.
- Acts as an intermediary between the PTAC and the application should clarification be required during PTAC project review.
- Verifies that projects have been completed.
- Ensures that payment is issued to the landowner upon project and administrative completion.
- Undertakes monitoring of the completed project where applicable.

5.2. The Project Technical Advisory Committee (PTAC):

- Ensures that the program is administered in accordance with the program guidelines.
- Evaluates each project on its potential to improve and protect habitat and/or water quality.
- Evaluates project merit and recommends projects to be funded.

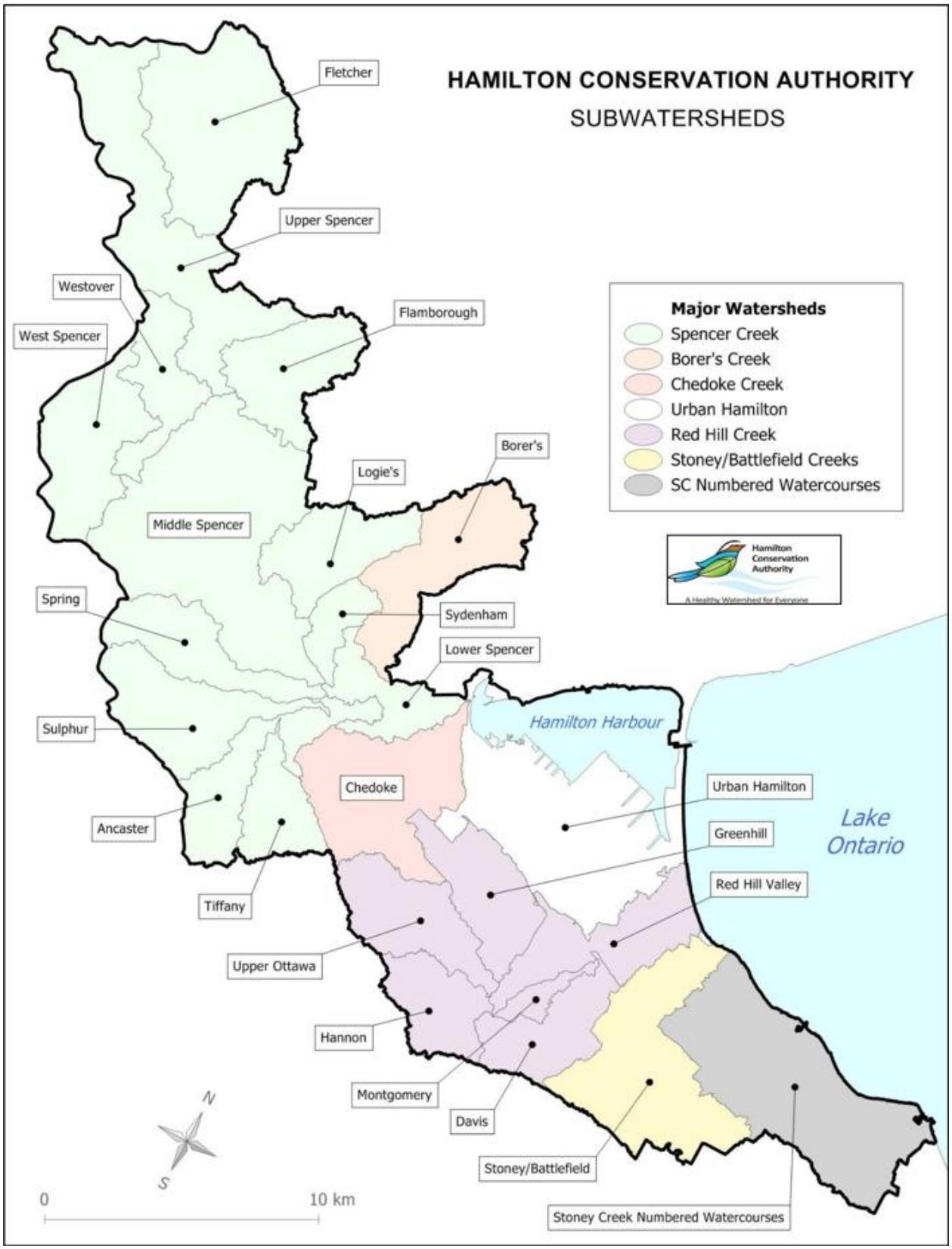
5.3. The Applicant:

- Contacts Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Staff (HWSP) to verify that the proposed project meets the WQHIP eligibility requirements.
- Contacts HWSP staff to arrange an on-site consultation. HWSP will be available to help plan the project and assist the applicant in applying for the WQHIP grants.
- Ensures that the information on the application is complete and correct.
- Ensures that the project meets all relevant local, provincial and federal laws and regulations.
- Ensures that appropriate approval/permits are obtained prior to construction and that all utility locates have been completed.
- Ensures that HWSP is notified as soon as possible of any changes to the project as

proposed, either before works commence or during construction.

- Contacts HWSP staff promptly once projects have been completed so that field verification of the projects can occur.
- Acknowledges, via the signing and submission of their WQHIP application, their commitment to maintain restored/enhanced areas and/or use new structures, or implement the proposed project in accordance with their WQHIP application for a period of not less than 10 years or the life of the structures.
- Provides all relevant receipts or proof of payment for materials or items purchased and copies of supporting cancelled cheques or proof of financing to receive the grant.
- Agrees to provide, if the property is sold, a copy of the approved WQHIP application and associated documents to the new landowner.
- Agrees to allow the HWSP and the HCA to promote the project to demonstrate the positive actions that are being taken by private property owners within the HCA watershed.
- Agrees to implement or allow HCA to implement post restoration monitoring suitable to the project type a minimum of 3-5 times in the first 10 years. Specific monitoring requirements will be outlined in project plans.

APPENDIX A: HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY WATERSHED MAP


HAMILTON CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
SUBWATERSHEDS
Major Watersheds
Spencer Creek
Borer's Creek
Chedoke Creek
Urban Hamilton
Red Hill Creek
Stoney/Battlefield Creeks
SC Numbered Watercourses
Hamilton Conservation Authority
A Healthy Watershed for Everyone
Fletcher
Upper Spencer
Westover
West Spencer
Flamborough
Borer's
Logie's
Middle Spencer
Spring
Sydenham
Lower Spencer
Sulphur
Hamilton Harbour
Chedoke
Urban Hamilton
Ancaster
Greenhill
Lake Ontario
Red Hill Valley
Tiffany
Upper Ottawa
Hannon
Montgomery
Davis
Stoney/Battlefield
Stoney Creek Numbered Watercourses
N
S
0
10 km

APPENDIX B: PROJECT SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

ALTERNATIVE WATERING SYSTEMS

Grant Rate and Cap: 75% up to $5,000



Insulated water trough with solar panels at right.
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Purpose: To improve water quality by restricting livestock access to watercourses and surface waters.

Eligible Project Types: Nose Pumps, Solar Pumps, Troughs, Gravity Systems.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Alternative watering systems/devices are eligible for funding only the project improves an existing environmental impairment, evidence of the impairment is present, and the project results in restricting livestock from the watercourse
- Livestock must be on the farm and have been present in the watercourse in the last year.
- A perimeter fence must currently be in place
- Wherever practical, livestock are being restricted from watercourses and other natural areas
- Consideration should be given to install tank away from surface water or sensitive areas and on well drained ground
- Overflow devices should be installed and runoff from the watering site should be managed to prevent soil erosion and runoff into surface water.

Eligible Costs:

- Materials, labour, equipment rentals, professional services, permits and engineering fees
- Alternative watering systems may be eligible for additional funding if runoff diversion projects are also being undertaken.

Ineligible Costs:

- Costs associated with a project that would encourage land, pasture, or environmentally sensitive areas to be put at risk or impairment
- Purchase of tools or machinery
- Primary hydro lines
- Drilling new water wells
- Labour, mileage, in-kind contributions and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

RURAL RUNOFF DIVERSION

GRANT RATE AND CAP: 75% UP TO $5,000

Purpose: To reduce the amount of contaminated runoff from manure storages and Outdoor Confinement Areas (as defined by OMAFA) by diverting stormwater away from sources of contamination to a satisfactory outlet.

Eligible Project Types:

- Preventative measures to prevent stormwater from coming into contact with manure, including, but not limited to eavestrough, berms or ditches that direct stormwater away from outdoor confinement areas or manure storage areas.
- Runoff diversion structures such as berms and ditches that direct stormwater away from an outdoor confinement area or manure storage
- Roofed permanent outdoor confinement areas
- Vegetated filter strip system
- Permanently vegetated area.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Projects must address an existing water quality impairment.
- Runoff must be managed in compliance with the Nutrient Management Regulation, O. Reg. 267/03
- If the operation is required to have a Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS), all nutrients and runoff must be managed according to the NMS and the applicant must provide a copy of the Nutrient Management Strategy to the HWSP for review with the submitted application
- The applicant agrees to allow the HWSP to consult with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness during the application process
- Runoff containment facilities must meet siting requirements as per Municipal by-laws and as outlined in Section 63 of the Nutrient Management Regulation, O. Reg. 267/03.
- Vegetated filter strip systems should meet the standards as outlined in the Nutrient Management Regulation, O. Reg. 267/03, and if the standards cannot be met a Certificate of Approval for a sewage works under the Ontario Water Resources Act must be obtained

- Permanently vegetated areas can be utilized where the risk of contamination is low and manure is comprised of at minimum 30% dry matter, and must meet all the following criteria:
    - Have at least 0.5m soil depth
    - Be a minimum of 3m from field tile drains, and
    - Be a minimum of:
        - 100m from municipal wells,
        - 15m from drilled wells,
        - and 30m from any other well
- Downspouts located where livestock can access them must be made of schedule 40 PVC (or stronger materials) and be well secured to prevent dislodging and prevent ice damage
- Eavestrough directed into a tile must also include debris traps to ensure that tiles do not become plugged
- All project types must discharge or divert stormwater away from any source of contamination and not pose any other hazards such as soil erosion
- Stormwater must not be discharged or diverted directly to a watercourse or wetland
- Berms, tile outlets and ditches must be permanent structures, require little maintenance, and be properly protected to prevent erosion, scouring or rodent damage
- The Review Committee may require an applicant to install an emergency shutoff valve if there is concern for conveyance of a spilled contaminant.

Eligible Costs:

- Materials, labour, equipment rentals, professional services, permits and engineering fees
- Professional assessment of surface and groundwater properties to verify the project meets required structural and environmental criteria.

Ineligible Costs:

- Costs associated with a project that would encourage new land, pasture, or environmentally sensitive areas to be put at risk or impairment
- Purchase of tools or machinery
- Paving of exercise yards or outdoor confinement areas where no permanent feeding/watering stations are present
- Labour, mileage, in-kind contributions and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business
- Vegetation that is not native to Ontario
- When roofing an exercise yard, the Clean Water Diversion grant cannot be combined with the funds available under Manure Storage.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

WATERCOURSE ACCESS RESTRICTION

Grant Rate and Cap: 75% up to $10,000

Purpose: To prevent humans, livestock and/machinery from crossing/accessing watercourses that are environmentally sensitive areas.

Eligible Project Types:

- Improved/replaced creek crossing for livestock and/or machinery
- New watercourse crossing for livestock and/or machinery
- livestock/human access restriction from watercourses, sensitive areas or species at risk habitats
- Exclusion fencing for livestock
- Clear span bridges for livestock or machinery
- Culvert crossings for livestock or machinery
- Bed level crossings for livestock or machinery.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies (e.g. Conservation Authority, OMAFA, Municipality, Drainage Superintendent etc.)
- Project must remediate an existing water quality or terrestrial or aquatic habitat impairment
- For bed-level crossings, gates must be installed at each streambank to allow livestock to be restricted out of the crossing. Gates shall be opened only for the purposes of moving livestock to the other side for pasture rotation purposes
- Watering facilities must be available on both sides of the stream
- To be eligible for cost-share on a livestock crossing or livestock access restriction:
    - Fencing along the watercourse must either be undertaken concurrently or currently in existence and in good repair
    - The applicant must currently have livestock on the pasture or field, or present within the last year
    - The field must be seeded to pasture
    - Evidence of the environmental impairment must be present, and

    - Whenever practical livestock has been restricted from all areas at risk
- For fencing projects:
    - Replacement fence may be considered, if the new fence is installed to provide significant environmental gain such as a wider buffer on a stream or wetland.
    - New fencing installed on existing farms, to create a new pasture area, may be eligible for funding if the project clearly demonstrates protection of an environmentally sensitive feature
    - Fencing will be funded to a maximum rate of $18.00 per metre.
    - Funding will only be provided for the portion of fencing that protects an environmentally sensitive feature, natural area, watercourse, wetland or significant woodlot
    - The proposed fence should restrict livestock access over the entire length of the natural feature and access should be discouraged by locating salt and mineral feeders away from the natural area
    - Temporary or alternative fencing may be considered in areas where permanent fencing is prone to damage due to ice floes/spring freshet flows
- If the project is on a municipal drain, the applicant must consult with the local drainage superintendent
- All bridge crossings must be engineered and the applicant and the contractor/engineer will be responsible for the structural integrity of the crossing
- During construction all field erosion control measures shall be implemented.

Eligible Costs:

- Materials, labour, equipment rentals, professional services, permits and engineering fees
- Permanent and temporary fencing
- Livestock crossings as outlined above.

Ineligible Costs:

- Costs associated with a project that would encourage new land, pasture, or environmentally sensitive areas to be put at risk or impairment
- Purchase of tools or machinery
- Primary hydro lines
- Drilling new water wells
- Temporary fencing
- Labour, mileage, in-kind contributions and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

EROSION CONTROL

Grant Rate and Cap: 75% up to $5,000

Purpose: To control or remediate existing soil erosion impairments that impact surface water quality, air or soil quality and/or fish and wildlife habitat.



A well-designed grassed waterway allows water to flow without eroding the channel and importantly, allows farm machinery to cross safely.
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Eligible Project Types:

- Conservation tillage – including residue management, no-till and mulch tillage
- Contour cropping
- Cover crops (approved fields paid an incentive of $100.00 per acre, up to 30 acres
- Grassed waterways
- Residue management
- Water and sediment control basins (WASCoBs)
- Riparian buffer strips.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies (e.g. Conservation Authority, OMAFA, Municipality, etc.)
- Projects on Municipal Drains must be approved by the applicable Drainage Superintendent
- Preference will be given to erosion control projects where conservation tillage practices are utilized on adjacent fields
- Projects must be planned and designed based upon the best management practices as outlined in the OMAFA BMP Guide: Controlling Soil Erosion on the Farm

- Projects must be constructed to standards as outlined in the Agricultural Erosion Control Structures: A Design and Construction Manual - Publication 832 and works must be supervised or completed by a qualified contractor
- For larger or more complex projects, engineered designs may be advised
- All collected water must be taken to a sufficient and legal outlet.
- For Tile Drain Control Structures:
    - Where applicable, drainage headers should be utilized to reduce the number of required control structures
    - Only commercial tile drain control structures will be funded
    - The retro-fitting of tile drain control structures into existing tile drainage and the addition of tile drain control structures to new tile drainage installations is eligible
- For Cover Crops:
    - Priority will be given to areas directly adjacent to watercourses or environmentally significant areas
    - Applicant should register all potential fields and provide a crop rotation plan
    - Crops may be tilled no sooner than the spring of the year following planting (may be chemically killed the previous fall) and cover crops must be destroyed before June 1
    - Only cover crops used exclusively for cover are eligible for grants such as rye buckwheat and oilseed radish - this excludes crops that are harvested or grazed such as winter cereals, winter canola, and forages
    - An applicant may apply for the cover crop incentive on the same field in different years where the applicant plants a different cover crop species or species mix in the second application year
    - The cover crop must be verified by Program staff and the applicants are responsible for contacting Program staff prior to being chemically destroyed, winter freeze, or before tillage to ensure that the cover crop is providing at least 50% ground cover.

Eligible Costs:

- Materials, labour, equipment rentals, professional services, permits and engineering fees.

Ineligible Costs:

- Costs associated with a project that would encourage new land, pasture, or environmentally sensitive areas to be put at risk or impairment
- Purchase of tools or machinery
- Systematic tile and subsurface drainage that is not an integral part of an erosion control structure
- Catch-basins without adequate sediment control
- Labour, mileage, in-kind contributions and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant’s business
- Installation or repair of the tile drainage system
- Maintenance of installed structures.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

HABITAT REHABILITATION

TERRESTRIAL AND AQUATIC HABITAT ENHANCEMENT

Grant Rate and Cap: Terrestrial - 75% up to $5,000
Aquatic – 75% up to $10,000

Purpose: To restore or enhance terrestrial and/or aquatic habitats.

Eligible Project Types:

- Seeding, planting, or live staking of native species of flora
- Habitat features (e.g. spawning substrate, turtle nesting bed, osprey platform, snake hibernaculum)
- Prairie burns
- Watercourse or stream channel reconstruction/enhancements
- Streambank stabilization
- Wetland creation.



A nesting structure was built for the provincially threatened Barn Swallow, left, with evidence of its success on one of its nesting ledges inside, right.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies (e.g. Conservation Authority, OMAFA, Municipality, etc.) and projects on Municipal Drains must be approved by the applicable Drainage Superintendent.
- Preference will be given to projects where best management practices are utilized on the property.
- HWSP grants may be combined with other funding sources, however grants are not to exceed 100% of total expenses.
- Applicants must inform HWSP staff of additional cost share funding.
- A plan is required specifying species, planting density, location, site preparation and maintenance; to promote approval, the plan should be developed in conjunction with Conservation Authority or HWSP staff or a private consultant.
- Trees must be planted in a manner that will not result in snow drift accumulation on the road (as a general rule, trees should be located 30m back from the edge of the road).
- Proper site preparation is required for planting and seeding, including the removal of any invasive species (see guidelines for invasive species management).
- The applicant is responsible for the care and maintenance of plantings - mowing or trimming may be needed during the establishment period to reduce competition from broadleaf annual weeds.
- Livestock must be excluded from the site; special consideration may be given for prairie restoration.
- Appropriate native species are mandatory, no cultivars or varieties, and invasive species are not eligible (staff can provide native plant supplier list). Should aim to have species that are suitable for plant hardiness **Zone 6b.**
- Windbreaks should have 30-50% porosity during periods of highest risk for erosion and consideration should be given to utilizing plastic mulch to reduce competition.
- If the plantings area is adjacent to leased agricultural lands, a copy of the planting plan must be provided to the lease holder and the boundaries of the planting must be clearly marked at a height visible to farm equipment operators.
- Riparian zone and streambank stabilization plantings should be designed to establish a vegetative cover and be a minimum of 5 metres wide to provide proper filtering action
- Seeding should only take place when sufficient moisture is present and the soil is rough enough to hold the seed.

Eligible Costs:

- Materials, labour, equipment rentals, professional services, permits and engineering fees
- Trees, shrubs and planting costs (costs for taller/larger stock may be considered where site conditions warrant its use)
- Tree protection systems
- Site preparation and establishment of cover crops on tilled land (in conjunction with tree planting).



Work was completed to remove a significant debris jam in 2019 (left photo prior to work), restoring fish passage to the creek as well as improving overall stream hydrology (right photo taken in 2020, a year after work was completed).

Ineligible Costs:

- Commercial stock, fruit trees or Christmas tree species which are commercially marketable in less than 15 years are not eligible
- Farmstead landscaping
- Labour, mileage, in-kind contributions and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business
- Irrigation ponds
- Non-native species of flora.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

HABITAT REHABILITATION

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Grant Rate and Cap: 75% up to $5,000

Purpose: To remove, treat, or otherwise manage eligible non-native, invasive plant species to rehabilitate degraded terrestrial and/or aquatic habitats.

Eligible Project Types:

- Herbicide applications by a licensed pesticide applicator to control invasive plant species
- Manual removals of herbaceous or shrubby invasive plant species, such as pulling, digging, and tarping
- Mechanical removals or invasive species using machinery such as forestry mulchers, chainsaws, or other approved methods.



A stand of *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed), pre and post treatment.

Eligibility Requirements:

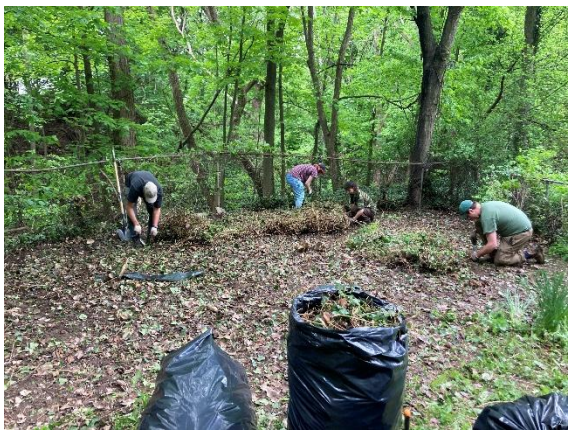
- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies (e.g. Conservation Authority, OMAFA, Municipality, etc.) if applying pesticides on private property, which may include a Letter of Opinion from the provincial regulatory agency.
- Landowners and contractors must follow best management practices (BMPs) for the removal, treatment, or management of invasive species in order to receive funding. This includes timelines for treatment, using best practices for removal, following up on multi-year management, and other relevant conditions.
- Pesticide applications must be applied by a licensed pesticide contractor.
- Landowners must indicate whether their initiative is a multi-year project on their application.
- Landowners must consider and make staff aware of their long-term plans for the site, which should include future restoration plans including the replanting of native stock
- Invasive species managed must be approved by Hamilton Conservation Authority staff, and recognized as a high priority species.
- Species present must be in an area of natural importance, including woodlands and woodlots, wetlands, riparian corridors, floodplains, prairies, meadows, or other non-manicured or actively farmed environments.

Eligible Costs:

- Professional contracting services, including but not limited to pesticide applicators, landscapers, or other environmental restoration services
- Disposal of vegetation
- Costs associated with permits or fees for management work
- Rental of tools and equipment.

Ineligible Costs:

- Major clearing of field, forests, or other natural landscapes
- Purchase of cultivation equipment for vegetation control
- Chemicals (herbicides and pesticides), spraying equipment, and personal protective equipment used for the purposes of applying pesticides, unless explicitly approved
- Costs associated with the removal, control, or management of plants not identified as invasive. Note some species may be non-native but not invasive, and all species managed must be approved by Hamilton Conservation Authority staff.



Volunteers manually removing *Hedera helix* (English Ivy).

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

CHEMICAL, FERTILIZER, PESTICIDE AND FUEL

HAZARDOUS STORAGE

Grant Rate and Cap: 75% up to $3,000

Purpose: To prevent contamination of ground and/or surface water by hazardous products by upgrading existing facilities.

Eligible Project Types: chemical, fertilizer, fuel or pesticide storages.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Completion of an Environmental Farm Plan is encouraged.
- Storage structures must meet or exceed the necessary regulatory requirements, including, but not limited to; O. Reg. 63/09 Pesticides Act, R.S.O. 1990 (if applicable), the Technical Standards and Safety Authority (TSSA), the Highway Traffic Act, the Liquid Fuels Handling Code (LFHC), the Ontario Fire Code (OFC), Municipal-by-laws, the Conservation Authorities Act, and the Ontario Building Code.
- Structures must be located an adequate distance away from water wells and surface water and obtain an EFP separation distance rating of 3 or better where reasonable.
- A copy of an emergency plan for accidental exposure/spills must be submitted prior to grant payment.

Eligible Costs:

- Materials, labour, equipment rentals, professional services, permits and engineering fees
- Labour and materials associated with the construction of storage upgrades.

Ineligible Costs:

- Labour, mileage, in-kind contributions and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business
- Pumps, nozzles or hoses
- Primary hydro.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

HABITAT REHABILTIATION

IN-STREAM BARRIER MITIGATION

Grant Rate and Cap: 75% up to $10,000

Purpose: To restore or enhance aquatic habitat through the remediation of an existing impairment to fisheries habitat. Impairments may include, but are not limited to, online ponds, dams, culverts, etc.



The removal of an online pond on this property led to the resurrection of a previously decommissioned tributary of Ancaster Creek that had been filled in decades earlier. This project led to the creation of 420m of tributary and improved and increased the amount of barrier-free habitat available to local fish populations.

Eligible Project Types:

- Bypass channel
- Dam removal
- Debris removal
- In-stream barrier mitigation
- Culvert retrofit
- Online pond mitigation.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies (e.g. Conservation Authority, OMAFA, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, MNR, Municipality, etc.) and projects on Municipal Drains must be approved by the applicable Drainage Superintendent
- For larger or more complex projects, engineered designs may be required
- Project must remediate an existing water quality impairment
- During construction all field erosion control measures shall be implemented
- Structures should be properly engineered to withstand expected water volume and velocities, the applicant and their contractor/engineer will be responsible for the structural integrity of the project.

Eligible Costs:

- Materials, labour, equipment rentals, professional services, permits and engineering fees.

Ineligible Costs:

- Installation or repair of the tile drainage system
- Maintenance of existing structures.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

MANURE, MILKHOUSE AND WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

Grant Rate and Cap: 75% up to $20,000

Nutrient Management Plan: 75% up to $3,000

Nutrient Management Strategy: 75% up to $2,000

Purpose: To prevent contamination of surface and groundwater during the storage and composting of manure and/or raw organic materials (e.g. fruit and vegetable waste, deadstock) and to encourage manure handling and spreading best management practices. To prevent water quality impairment from milkhouse wastewater discharges to surface and ground water, and to encourage milkhouse waste management best management practices.



A covered manure storage eliminates runoff.
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Eligible Project Types:

- Roofed solid manure storages with runoff containment
- Unroofed solid manure storages with runoff containment or treatment
- Concrete/steel liquid manure storage tanks with/without covers
- A 3-year Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) created using OMAFRA's NMAN software program. Milkhouse washwater storage within an existing or proposed manure storage system that meets the minimum storage requirements
- Storage in a separate milkhouse washwater storage tank
- Washwater treatment in a treatment trench system that meets the building permit standards
- Innovative treatment systems will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must have a certified Nutrient Management Strategy and Nutrient Management Plan unless:
    - If under the Nutrient Management Act and municipal by-laws, the manure storage facility does not require a certified Nutrient Management Strategy and the manure

storage is less than 5 Nutrient Units, HWSP staff will work with technical advisors and the applicant to determine appropriate sizing
    - Manure is not spread on the applicant's farm. In this instance, Program staff will work with technical advisors and the applicant to determine appropriate BMPs to address disposal of manure
- All manure storages, regardless of operation size or status must meet the requirements of Regulation 267/03 under the Nutrient Management Act - this includes the Siting and Construction Standards which require manure storage facilities to be designed and inspected by a professional engineer
- Applicants are responsible for determining the requirements for their proposed storage; contact OMAFOMA for this service
- Applicants must complete a nutrient management plan and it must be submitted to HWSP staff for review prior to works proceeding - this approval does not replace or supersede approval required through the Municipality, Conservation Authority, Building Permit process or the Nutrient Management Act
- A copy of the approved building permit must be submitted
- All manure and runoff storages must:
    - Have a minimum of 250-day storage capacity. Adequate storage capacity must be provided for both solid and liquid fractions of manure, as well as contaminated precipitation and washwaters (where applicable). Facilities with greater than 400 days of storage will be cost-shared to the equivalent of 400 days
    - Have runoff containment from exercise yards, and
    - Permanent ladders must not be installed in manure storages.
- For solid/liquid manure storages:
    - If a new barn is constructed, funding eligibility will be pro-rated to the volume of storage that was required for the existing/previous conditions (e.g. in cases where the structure has been sized and constructed for an expanded operation, a simple arithmetic formula will be used - a farmer currently has a herd of 50 dairy cows (including heifers and dry cows) and plans to expand to 75; the storage is sized and constructed for the 75 herd size and the eligible grant would be calculated based on 50/75 or 66% of the final cost of the project
    - Where the herd size has not increased and/or in the event the structure completed is larger than the proposed structure in the approved WQHIP application, or the volume of the approved structure will be divided by the volume of the structure constructed to arrive at the pro-rating factor
- For roofed solid storages, three walls must be concrete at least 4 ft (1.2 m) above grade and the roof must provide adequate clearance for tractor and loader operation
- The floor of the storage must be sloped to contain any liquids within the storage and the storage entrance must be raised to prevent the entry of surface water from outside and to contain liquids inside
- Livestock access to solid manure storage areas should be discouraged
- All open liquid and runoff storages must be protected by permanent barrier and gates designed to prevent child entry - suitable fencing would include chain link types, solid

steel, wood fencing, etc. and the total barrier height (storage wall and fence) must be at least 5 ft (1.5 m) above the closest adjacent ground level

- Safety fence design specifications shall meet the minimum standards as stated in the most recent version of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' Agricultural Pollution Control Manual
- Fences may be placed up to 15 ft (4.6 m) away from the storage where equipment access is necessary
- Where flat covers, at or near ground level, are not designed for livestock or vehicle loads, a safety fence and a permanent warning sign must be installed.
- Access ports must have covers weighing at least 45 lb. (20.4 kg) and have a chain bolted to the storage top
- Gates with secure childproof latches must be installed at access points and all fencing and safety requirements must be met.
- Manure hopper openings at or below floor level shall be fitted with a safety railing or floor grill spacing between rails of not more than 4 inches (10 cm).
- Where a separate liquid manure storage tank is connected to a livestock building, traps or valves shall be installed to prevent gases from the manure storage from entering the building.
- For milkhouse facilities:
    - A sign indicating the danger due to toxic gases must be installed at every access to a liquid manure or milkhouse/milking parlour wash water storage tank or under floor manure transfer chamber
    - Systems proposing liquid storage of milkhouse/milking parlour wastes must provide at least 250-day capacity for the wash water produced and the minimum storage volume is 5700 cubic feet (36,000 gallons or 160,000 liters)
- For deadstock composting facilities:
    - Compost facilities must meet the most recent OMAFA guidelines and Provincial regulations. Information on deadstock disposal options can be found on OMAFA's website: www.omafra.gov.on.ca
    - Where a deadstock composting facility is constructed as part of a roofed solid manure storage, it must have a separate entrance from outside the building and be separated from the manure storage by a concrete wall
- For other composting facilities:
    - Green manure composting facilities (generated from vegetable and fruit waste) will be considered on a project by project basis
    - Further details on green manure composting structures can be found on OMAFA's website: www.omafra.gov.on.ca
    - The applicant is responsible for ensuring the technical adequacy of the project and that the structure is sized to contain 100% of the materials generated on-farm
    - Green manure composting structures must prevent or contain or treat any runoff from the compost pile - to prevent, contain or treat compost runoff, the following design criteria should be considered: a roof or other method of cover, a holding tank and/or a permanently vegetated area to filter run-off

- Applicants are responsible for obtaining approvals from appropriate agencies prior to construction.

- For Nutrient Management Plans (NMP):
  - A printout or electronic summary from the NMAN Program containing the following information must be submitted to HWSP staff for review;
    - For each farm property, a Farm Unit Summary
    - Manure/nutrient source summary, manure/nutrient information (type, analysis, etc.)
    - If applicable, MSTOR manure storage sizing calculations & storage information (yearly amount, number of days of storage, amount remaining)
    - Manure/nutrient application graph (tracks total (all types), amount remaining)
    - Manure/nutrient application summary (for each field, the rate, source, amount, method, setback), and
    - Field summary (field id, soil information, area, crop type, # of nutrient applications)
  - To receive funding, the nutrient management plan must adequately supply the required crop nutrients without over applying and producing 'red flags' in the NMAN program.

Eligible Costs:

- Materials, labour, equipment rentals, professional services, permits and engineering fees
- Professional fees for preparation of a nutrient management plan
- Registration fees for nutrient management training sessions. Software is available at www.nutrientmanagment.ca
- Transfer pumping equipment and piping
- Walls around yards to direct contaminated precipitation into a runoff storage, regardless of height, only an equivalent 1 ft (0.3 m) concrete wall and the footing will be funded
- Storage covers and roofs
- Upgrading storages to increase the capacity of existing storages to a minimum 250 days and a maximum of 400 days
- Temporary storage sumps for use prior to transfer to long term storage
- Permanent transfer piping from the barn gutters or sumps to long term storage
- Gas traps incorporated to prevent gases from entering the barn
- Professional assessment of the surface and groundwater properties of the site and soil materials for the purpose of verifying that the project meets prescribed structural and environmental criteria
- Constructing a permanent roof over an existing storage
- Permanent transfer piping from the milkhouse or parlour to a suitable storage
- Sump (when required) plus all associated electrical connections for milkhouse operations.

Ineligible Costs:

- Crop scouting fees
- Fees associated with the completion of a NMP required by the Nutrient Management Act
- Pumping equipment to empty long term storages
- Manure spreading equipment
- Slats or solid floors over in-barn storages including support posts, beams and roofs
- Barn gutters with less than 60-day capacity
- Labour, mileage, in-kind contributions and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business
- Equipment associated with moving manure to a permanent manure storage
- Equipment associated with the land application of manure
- Slats or solid floors over in-barn storage including support posts, beams and roofs
- Barn gutters
- Timbers that are treated with creosote, pentachlorophenol or other toxic substances
- Compost barrels, open heaps on bare soil, plastic bag composting or prefabricated composting structures
- Repair or maintenance of an existing compost structure
- Tarps and associated items used to temporarily cover the compost structure
- Cost of milkhouse and/or parlour structure.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

STORMWATER LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT

Project Type	*Grant Rate**	*Cap**
*(Residential) Downspout Disconnection (per downspout)**	*75%*	*$200*
*(Residential) Rain Garden**	*75%*	*$2,000*
*(Residential) Rain Barrel**	*75%*	*$50*
*(Commercial / Institutional) Stormwater Landscaping***	*75%*	*$5,000*

Notes:
The above noted grant rates and caps are applied to eligible project costs only which vary by Project Type, see further detailed information below on eligible costs.
*Grants for these project types can be stacked as follows:

- A maximum of 3 LID project types per property will be considered
- To be considered for funding, rain barrels must be installed in conjunction with another proposed project type
- Only one Rain Garden per property will be considered

****This grant is only open to commercial/institutional properties.** To be eligible for consideration for a Stormwater Landscaping grant, the property works are being completed on must:

- Be in an area serviced by combined sewers
- Be professionally designed to promote infiltration and incorporate a minimum of 3 of the following stormwater lid practices (excluding rain barrels); Bioretention, Bioswales, Downspout Disconnection, Dry Ponds, Enhanced Swales, Infiltration Basins/Chambers/Trenches, Rain Gardens, Swales, Vegetated Filter Strips or Wetlands

Purpose: The aim of the stormwater low impact development grants is to conserve and improve the quality of stormwater runoff water by:

- Supporting the water cycle and improving water quality through the retention, infiltration, evaporation and/transpiration of stormwater
- Focusing on runoff prevention and treating stormwater runoff as close to the source as possible

In light of the purpose of the stormwater low impact development grants, priority consideration will be given to project applications where:

- The property is serviced by combined sewers
- The application incorporates more than one project type to reduce stormwater runoff.

Eligibility Requirements:

To be eligible to apply for a Stormwater LID grant ALL projects must:

- Be able to demonstrate that the proposed project will result in improving or enhancing the ability of the site to absorb stormwater runoff rather than directing it to local sewers, downspout sewer connections or into nearby or adjacent watercourses/waterbodies.
- Incorporate recommended LID best management practices, design considerations and construction specifications (See https://wiki.sustainabletechnologies.ca/wiki/LID_BMP_Fact_Sheets).
- Meet any additional criteria listed by project type below
    - ensure that any overflow from the installed project drains onto the applicant's property or flows safely to a suitable sewer connection
    - Ensure that installed LID features maintain any setbacks listed here/per project type below are applied to both the property featuring the installation and also to adjacent/neighbouring properties
        - be a minimum of 4m downslope from all buildings and foundations
        - be a minimum of 4m from wells and septic beds, and if the LID feature is uphill of a septic a minimum setback of 15m is required
        - for Downspout Disconnections the downspout must outlet at minimum of 2m from foundations
    - Avoid the installation of Stormwater LID features where the increased filtration of stormwater into the soils could result in damage, erosion, or contamination, so any projects being installed under the following site conditions ARE NOT eligible to receive funding:
        - Installation site is over shallow bedrock, shallow water table, near karst, spill prone areas, contaminated soils, or areas where there is risk to mature trees, sensitive natural areas, property or infrastructure (including underground utilities)
        - Installation sites have a shallow well(s) <3m in depth
        - Installation sites that are on/within drainage swales, snow storage areas, engineered Stormwater LID features, or interfere with existing lot drainage
        - Installation sites fall within 2-year time of travel wellhead protection areas in Greensville and Freelton, (See https://www.protectingwater.ca/wp-

content/uploads/sites/2/2023/02/swp03-Appendix-B-Hamilton-Vulnerability-Report-v32-final.pdf, refer to pages 140,141).

Eligible costs:

- For downspout disconnections only: downspout extension, downspout elbow
- For rain barrels only: rain barrel, fixtures/hosing to enhance overflow
- For rain gardens only:
  - Compost, sand or soil amendment (peat is not eligible)
  - Native plants (please note that non-native species, and cultivars or varieties of native plants are not eligible for funding).

Ineligible costs:

- Soffits and fascia, horizontal eavestroughs
- Purchasing of tools and/machinery
- Contractor costs, labour and/design costs
- Peat or peat-based soil amendment
- Lawn seed
- Non-native species, and cultivars or varieties of native plants.

Eligibility requirements for Rain Garden installations:

To be eligible to apply to receive funding, proposed rain gardens must meet the following criteria (please refer to the diagram below for further details):

- Be in a relatively flat area with contributing slopes between 1-5%
- Be excavated to a minimum basin depth of 85 cm
- Be designed so that the ponding depth (area where stormwater may accumulate during storm events) is within the excavated basin and at least 5cm of space is between the ponding depth and the original ground level
- Be designed so that the area of the garden (LXW) is 10-15% of the contributing drainage area
- Soil amendments like sand or compost must be used to amend native soils to create loam soils to increase the amount of water absorbed/infiltrating into the garden
- The inflow must be above the outflow
- Suitable native species that tolerate both drought and periodic flooding will be planted – see the following for recommendations **https://cvc.ca/document/plant-list-native-plants-for-rain-ready-landscapes/?access=0fa290a78fd5934ad7848f934da7322d.**

Rain gardens being installed that have any of the following features, or where the noted site conditions are present ARE NOT eligible to receive funding (HWSP Stewardship Technicians can help confirm):

  - A contributing drainage area to the rain garden that exceeds 100m2
  - A contributing slope to the rain garden that exceeds 5%
  - The rain garden is within 15m of a slope that exceeds 15%.

Eligibility requirements for a Stormwater Landscaping grant:

To be eligible for consideration for a Stormwater Landscaping grant:

- The property works are being completed on must be in an area serviced by combined sewers
- The property must be commercial, and or institutional
- The proposed project must be professionally designed/engineered to promote infiltration and incorporate a minimum of 3 of the following stormwater lid practices (excluding rain barrels, green/blue roofs): Bioretention, Bioswales, Downspout Disconnection, Dry Ponds, Enhanced Swales, Infiltration Basins/Chambers/Trenches, Permeable Pavement, Rain Gardens, Swales, Vegetated Filter Strips or Wetlands
- The proposed features must incorporate recommended LID design considerations, recommendations and construction specifications (See https://wiki.sustainabletechnologies.ca/wiki/LID_BMP_Fact_Sheets)
- The proposed project must include an appropriate monitoring and maintenance plan per the above recommended best practices.

Eligible Costs for Stormwater Landscaping grants only:

- Materials and equipment rentals
- Labour and/professional services
- Permits and engineering fees
- Native plant species (no cultivars or varieties).

Ineligible Costs:

- Purchase of tools or machinery
- Vehicle rentals
- Labour, mileage, in-kind contributions and/or machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business
- Impermeable liner/geomembrane, weeping tile or other subsurface drainage to protect foundations
- Soffits or fascia, horizontal eavestroughs
- Non-native species of plants
- Disposal fees.

Hamilton Watershed Stewardship Program

WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

TECHNICAL STUDIES

Grant Rate and Cap: 75% up to $2,500 for Terrestrial,

75% up to $5000 for Aquatic,

75% up to $500 for Managed Forest Plan

Purpose: support the undertaking of professional technical studies to advance aquatic ecosystem restoration, terrestrial habitat enhancement, and sustainable land management practices through actionable report recommendations.

Eligible Project Types:

- Ecological, terrestrial, and aquatic habitat assessments, including Ecological Land Classification and species-at-risk evaluations
- Restoration and naturalization planning for streams, riparian areas, wetlands, meadows, forests, and other natural features
- Woodland, forest, and invasive species management planning
- Water quality, hydrology, stormwater, and aquatic ecosystem investigations and monitoring
- Erosion, sediment transport, slope stability, and fluvial geomorphology studies;
- Fisheries habitat, fish passage, and aquatic habitat enhancement assessments, including culvert and barrier evaluations.

Eligibility Requirements:

To qualify for funding assistance, technical studies should:

- Demonstrate a clear and actionable report that provides a framework detailing both the impact and proposed implementation of restoration or stewardship projects
- Be completed by qualified professionals with appropriate accreditations and expertise
- Comply with applicable municipal, provincial, and federal legislation
- Provide a clear and actionable timeline where applicable for time sensitive projects.

Eligible Costs:

- Consulting and technical professional fees

- Field investigations, site assessments, and environmental surveys
- Ecological, aquatic, forestry, hydrologic, or geomorphic analysis
- Water quality sampling and laboratory testing
- Mapping, modeling, and technical reporting
- Project-related data collection and field expenses.

Ineligible Costs:

- Studies completed prior to approval
- Costs solely related to development or regulatory requirements
- Recoverable taxes, equipment purchases, and unrelated overhead costs.