



**AGRICULTURAL WATERSHED
ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM &
WATERSHED RESILIENCY AND
RESTORATION PROGRAM**

**JOINT PROGRAMS APPROACH:
2017-2018 GRANT APPLICATION
OVERVIEW**

Photo: North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance



DOCUMENT INTENT

Agriculture and Forestry (AF) and Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) established the Agricultural Watershed Enhancement Program and the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program. This document describes and provides guidance on the current year of the 'Joint Programs Approach' adopted by AF and AEP for the delivery of these complementary programs. **Applications for the fiscal year 2017-18 will be accepted for consideration for funding under the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program only.**

GOALS OF PROGRAMS

Improve flood and drought resiliency and enhance water quality through restoration and enhancement of Alberta's watersheds.

PROGRAM OVERVIEWS

AGRICULTURAL WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT (AWE) PROGRAM

Agriculture and Forestry (AF) established and administers the *Growing Forward 2* – Agricultural Watershed Enhancement (AWE) Program. Financial support for the AWE Program is provided through *Growing Forward 2*, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. AWE aims to increase the uptake of wetland restoration and riparian health beneficial management practices (BMPs) by producers within agricultural

sectors. AWE facilitates the realization of measureable changes within high risk watershed areas and facilitates the delivery of targeted, comprehensive extension programs, focused on addressing water quality issues. **AF will not fund any additional proposals in this fiscal year due to oversubscription of the program.**

More information regarding AWE can be found on the program website at:

http://growingforward.alberta.ca/Programs/index.htm?contentId=AGRI_WTRSHED_PRG&useSecondary=true&active=no

WATERSHED RESILIENCY AND RESTORATION PROGRAM (WRRP)

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) established and administers the Watershed Resiliency and Restoration Program (WRRP). The WRRP aims to promote the long-term ability of watersheds to mitigate the effects of future flood and drought events. The primary objective of the program is to increase the natural capacity of the Province's watersheds to reduce the intensity, magnitude, duration and effects from flooding and droughts for the benefit of Albertans and their communities. Additionally, the program aims to address impacts of past flooding and drought through the restoration of degraded priority areas within Alberta's watersheds. This will be accomplished through non-structural mitigation measures, ongoing stewardship, and information to decision makers, and will complement the Province's structural programs (i.e., Alberta Community Resilience Program). AEP will dispense WRRP project funding up until the 2020-21 fiscal year, depending on available funds, with all WRRP projects requiring completion by March 31, 2021

More information regarding WRRP can be found on the program website at: www.wrrp.alberta.ca

JOINT PROGRAMS APPROACH

While the AWE and WRRP programs may focus on differing sectors and outcomes, both programs have natural synergies and complement each other with a high degree of focus on best management practices, and actions that result in on-the-ground changes that improve watersheds across the province of Alberta. To ensure an effective alignment between the two programs, the Government of Alberta (GOA) established a Joint Programs Approach for the delivery of these programs that includes:

- ▶ Collaboration between AF and AEP on decision making and prioritization between flood/drought and water quality objectives; and,
- ▶ A consistent GOA approach to watershed restoration activities under these programs.

Under the Joint Programs Approach, the AWE program will continue to target projects within agricultural lands and sectors in the White

Zone of the province, while the WRRP program will consider all project locations and sectors including urban municipalities, agricultural and non-agricultural lands, as well as Public Lands within the Green Zone of the Province. In this current round of funding, AEP will consider projects under the WRRP where they meet the flood and drought objectives, while also evaluating for the secondary objective of water quality in the priority watersheds as determined by the programs.

The Joint Programs Approach focuses on projects that will contribute to meeting the following overall program outcomes:

- ▶ Advancing flood, drought and water quality resiliency in priority areas within watersheds in Alberta to enhance communities and improve environments;
- ▶ Restoring and enhancing ecological connectivity and function and water quality in critical areas;
- ▶ Increasing knowledge, awareness and participation by program participants, agricultural producers and the public in activities that restore and sustain watershed functions; and,
- ▶ Enhancing community capacity to restore and maintain critical watershed features for future generations.

FUNDING PRIORITIES UNDER THE JOINT PROGRAMS APPROACH

The type of projects that will be considered under the Joint Programs Approach includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Activities that have a clear and demonstrable benefit to the watershed's flood, drought or water quality mitigation abilities;
- ▶ Multi-year proposals, including initial project planning and development related to partnership projects for flood, drought and water quality mitigation that will be implemented over multiple years of the program; and/or,
- ▶ The undertaking of education, outreach, data collection, research or other planning activities related to long-term projects that are directly tied to watershed restoration and resiliency, water quality and on-the-ground projects.

In many cases, these projects will be focused on, but are not necessarily limited to, projects planned with non-governmental organizations, First Nations and local authorities in partnership with land owners and producers which identify strategies and implement measures within watersheds to enhance the resiliency of natural systems, mitigate the impacts from flooding and droughts, and improve and maintain water quality.

Priorities for short-term and long-term projects under the Joint Programs Approach include:

- ▶ High-risk/contributing areas at the watershed level;
- ▶ Floodplain or channel naturalization;
- ▶ Bank stabilization through riparian enhancements or approved bio-engineering techniques;
- ▶ Wetland restoration and creation;
- ▶ Protection of existing natural features and key areas;
- ▶ Mitigation of potential anthropogenic influences on water quality;
- ▶ Projects that provide a high benefit to flood or drought resiliency; and/or
- ▶ Consideration of the secondary and complementary project selection criteria.

WATERSHED RESILIENCY AND RESTORATION PROGRAM FUNDING ALLOCATION

WRRP funding has been renewed for an additional 4 years with \$14 million to be allocated until 2021. All submissions will be evaluated on a tiered basis. The Tiers are as follows:

Tier 1: Projects with a total cost up to \$100,000:

- ▶ Projects limited in scope to one location or a portion of a watershed;
- ▶ Works that can be completed within the fiscal year that funding is allocated; or
- ▶ Projects that have a local benefit to watershed resiliency flood and drought mitigation.

Tier 2: Projects with a total cost over \$100,000:

- ▶ Projects that have a benefit for large portion of a watershed, sub-watershed or an entire watershed;
- ▶ Projects within a watershed or sub-watershed involving multiple land owners or parcels of land in a given geographic area;
- ▶ Multi-year project proposals;
- ▶ Projects that demonstrate a cumulative benefit to flood or drought mitigation and collaboration amongst multiple parties; or
- ▶ Projects with a high degree of flood/drought mitigation or water quality benefits associated with the funding requested.

AGRICULTURAL WATERSHED ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM FUNDING ALLOCATION

The Agricultural Watershed Enhancement Program will not be providing funding for proposals submitted in the 2017-18 fiscal year. Grant funding allocated to groups in the previous rounds of proposal submissions is secure.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FUNDS UNDER THE JOINT PROGRAMS APPROACH?

Applicants must be legal entities, such as:

- ▶ Non-governmental organizations;
- ▶ Municipalities;
- ▶ First Nations;
- ▶ Incorporated watershed groups;
- ▶ Drainage/irrigation districts; and,
- ▶ Any other group registered under the provincial Societies Act.

WATERSHED RESILIENCY AND RESTORATION PROGRAM

Applicants funded under WRRP include those that are experienced or have the ability to complete projects in watershed mitigation measures such as riparian or wetland restoration, or who are completing projects in partnership with landowners.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING UNDER THE JOINT PROGRAMS APPROACH?

Examples of projects considered under the Joint Applications Approach include projects designed to mitigate flood/droughts or improve water quality within a watershed including, but not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Riparian enhancements (e.g. watering systems, buffers, stream crossings, riparian fencing, riparian plantings);
- ▶ Wetland enhancements (e.g. wetland creation, enhancement or restoration);
- ▶ Floodplain/river improvements (e.g. channel naturalization, removal of old structures, removal of flow impediments, re-vegetation, floodplain storage capacity enhancements, winter site relocations);
- ▶ Creation/increase of absorptive capacities;
- ▶ Removal of existing drainage projects or works; and
- ▶ Onsite water retention efforts.

Applications may include projects for one individual site or multiple sites within a watershed under the same project plan. Data collection efforts for the purpose of research, evaluation and assessment and education and outreach will be considered but must be directly tied to one of the above mentioned activities as part of an overall project plan.

WHAT PROJECTS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING UNDER THE JOINT PROGRAMS APPROACH?

Examples of ineligible projects under the Joint Programs Approach include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Structural restoration or construction (e.g. dams, berms, dykes, tunnels, riprap, storm water ponds);



- ▶ Municipal infrastructure, such as stormwater ponds, etc.;
- ▶ Groyne and other in-stream structures;
- ▶ River training or realignment;
- ▶ “Hard armouring” erosion protection (e.g. non-bio-engineering projects, such as riprap and other river armouring) ;
- ▶ Projects that increase the development opportunities or liabilities within flood prone areas;
- ▶ Weed control projects/programs; and,
- ▶ Dugouts and water wells.

Additionally, structural projects eligible for funding under AEP’s Alberta Community Resilience Program are not eligible to receive funding under the WRRP.

WHAT COSTS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING UNDER THE JOINT PROGRAMS APPROACH?

Eligible project costs to the applicant funded under the Joint Programs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- ▶ Salaries and benefits directly tied to staff hired for project(s);
- ▶ Reasonable travel-related expenses as outlined by AF or AEP;
- ▶ Cost of computer equipment together with software to be used for the eligible activities up to a maximum of \$3,000 unless otherwise approved
- ▶ Speaker fees for workshops, conference or seminars related to watershed resiliency and restoration;

- ▶ Costs for development or delivery of eligible watershed education/engagement activities to support project development/delivery;
- ▶ Costs of goods and services to promote and deliver the eligible activities (including for WRRP administrative costs);
- ▶ Operating expenses related to the project;
- ▶ Equipment purchases and leases;
- ▶ Capital infrastructure directly tied to restoration or conservation projects;
- ▶ Materials and deliverables directly tied to the project;
- ▶ Technical consulting and professional services;
- ▶ Education, communication and outreach activities related to the project; and,
- ▶ Post project evaluation performed within the program term and directly linked to project deliverables.

WHAT COSTS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING UNDER JOINT PROGRAMS APPROACH?

Costs not eligible for funding under the Joint Programs include

- ▶ Salary and benefits of existing staff that are funded by other sources;
- ▶ Expenditures or costs that are not approved by AEP;
- ▶ Expenses for the administration and coordination of activities to maintain a WRRP project in Alberta beyond the approved proposal;



- ▶ Expenses for a group proposal where implementation of projects designed to mitigate flood/drought is not the primary outcome;
- ▶ Goods and Services Tax (GST);
- ▶ Expenses incurred outside of the project term;
- ▶ Purchase of capital equipment not directly tied to the project;
- ▶ Purchase or construction of real property or structural works;
- ▶ Purchase of fleet (e.g. land, water, air vehicles);
- ▶ Land or wetland conservation offsets or compensation; and
- ▶ Academic research or education/outreach not tied to a specific approved WRRP project.

PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

The following outlines a list of broad criteria that will be taken into consideration during the selection of eligible projects. These criteria, as well as their relative weighting, are subject to change and should only be considered guidance to applicants. For WRRP, the following criteria are in addition to any requirements related to the project tiers.

PROJECT GOALS AND BENEFITS

PRIMARY

Flood and Drought Mitigation

- ▶ Degree the project mitigates the negative impacts from flood or drought

Efforts to Reduce Risk to Community Safety and Health

- ▶ Headwaters and floodplains where individuals could be affected

SECONDARY

Biodiversity

- ▶ Protection of species at risk
- ▶ Improving biodiversity
- ▶ Improving conditions for fish and wildlife

Additional Environmental Benefits

- ▶ Water quality
- ▶ Improved habitats

COMPLEMENTARY

Data Gathering

- ▶ Data related activities will ideally relate to the watershed as a whole and be of use to future projects and decision making in the watershed

Capacity Building

- ▶ Projects or elements of projects that improve the capabilities of authorities or bodies within watersheds, such as improved land-use decision making
- ▶ Ability of organizations to deliver programs that support the watershed restoration and resiliency program outcomes

Outreach, Education and Stewardship

- ▶ Projects or elements of projects that improve the awareness and understanding of the importance and sensitivity of natural systems and riparian areas within a watershed



ANCILLARY FACTORS

COST SHARING AND LEVERAGED FUNDING AND BENEFITS

Proposed projects should include a level of cost sharing and will ideally leverage funding or benefits from other programming. This is not a requirement of the Programs; however, projects that bring additional resources outside of the WRR Program will receive high priority.

COST/BENEFIT

The proposed project must provide good value for money and must justify the costs of the project in relation to the benefits that Albertan's and the watershed will receive.

CONSTRUCTION

Additional consideration will be given to proposed projects requiring limited construction activities and disturbances to natural environments.

LONGEVITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND MAINTENANCE

Proposed projects will ideally have a lasting impact on the watershed and require minimal ongoing or maintenance costs/efforts beyond the initial phase of the project

REACH/SCALE OF EFFORT

Projects that have a positive impact on the entire watershed are favoured over those affecting a single water body.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Ideally, proposed projects will involve partnerships or collaboration with multiple actors within the watershed. Additionally, the level of community support for the proposed project will be taken into consideration.

HOW TO APPLY FOR THE 2017-2018 FUNDING YEAR

Applications under the Joint Programs Approach for the WRRP 2017/2018 funding year must be submitted on or before February 17, 2017 to GOA.Watershed@gov.ab.ca.

The application must include a completed application form and grant application proposal.

- ▶ Completed Application Form
- ▶ Project(s) Proposal that includes:
 - ▶ Project Summary
 - Rationale as to how the activities and the overall project will improve flood or drought resiliency
 - Rationale as to why the project location is important for flood/drought/water quality mitigation
 - ▶ Map and Project Location(s)
 - ▶ Project Specifics
 - Detailed description on the project and benefit to program outcomes and objectives, including methodology and process for completing the works
 - Scope of work
 - Timetable
 - Deliverables of the project
 - Detailed description of all activities associated with the project and how it ties to the deliverables
 - Demographics of the project area including:
 - Total area directly affected by projects within the watershed
 - % agriculture land base
 - % acreages
 - % recreation
 - % other industry or land use
 - ▶ Partner Information
 - Who is involved and how
 - Details on each partner including name, affiliation, role and contribution
 - ▶ Project Financial Plan
 - List of total cost for the project broken down by activity and partner contribution
 - Identify apportionment of costs not funded by the WRRP
 - In-kind contributions
 - ▶ Multi-year projects are to give a breakdown of the above mentioned by fiscal year (April 1 to March 31).

