

2024 Restoration Program Guidelines

Section 1- Program Description

The NPCA is taking action to restore and improve water quality, wildlife habitat and forest cover across the NPCA watershed. The NPCA will continue to offer a restoration program with the vision of:

'Fostering collaboration among partners in the watershed to protect and restore water quality and diverse habitats by completing projects that meet the long-term mandate of the NPCA.'

The Restoration Program is shaped by the following **Guiding Principles**:

- a) Embracing partnerships and shared responsibility;
- b) Leveraging funding opportunities for an incentive-based cost sharing program;
- c) Promoting of adaptive management to meet the changing needs on the landscape;
- d) Conveying awareness of the benefits of environmental restoration and to celebrate success.

The top line **Goals** of the Restoration Program are to:

- 1) **Improve** water quality, wildlife habitat, and forest cover to the benefit of local ecosystems and the overall health of the watershed;
- 2) **Monitor, assess, and communicate the change** of these conditions in the watershed; and
- 3) **Enable innovative approaches, partnerships, and solutions** to improve water quality, wildlife habitat, and forest cover.

This guide provides information on funding opportunities, eligibility requirements, the application and evaluation process. You're welcome to apply for 2024 funding, or, if you have questions contact the NPCA for further information at 905-788-3135 or by email at restoration@npca.ca.

Section 2- Who Can Apply?

1. Private Landowners
2. Incorporated Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
3. Non-incorporated organizations (Nature Clubs, "Friends of" organizations)

Section 3- Project Process

- Step 1. Applicant expresses interest; site visit by NPCA staff; applicant submits application form.
- Step 2. Project application evaluated by NPCA staff.
- Step 3. Project approval by Restoration Program Review Committee and NPCA Board of Directors
- Step 4. Detailed Project Plan completed with NPCA staff; Landowner/Partner Agreement signed
- Step 5. Project implementation
- Step 6. Project closing/reconciling accounts
- Step 7. On-going monitoring/assessment

Section 4- Restoration Project Categories

	Eligible Project Types	Funding Rate	Funding Ceiling	Application Date for 2024 projects
1	Livestock Restriction & Crossings	Up to 75%	\$10,000	November 24 ^t , 2023
2	Conservation Farm Practices	Up to 75%	\$5,000	November 24 ^t , 2023
3	Tree Planting/ Woodland Restoration	Up to 75%	\$10,000	November 24 ^t , 2023
4	Instream/Riparian Habitat Restoration	Up to 75%	\$10,000	November 24 ^t , 2023
5	Wetland Restoration	Up to 75%	Excavation \$15,000 Planting \$5,000	November 24 ^t , 2023
6	Upland Habitat Restoration	Up to 75%	\$5,000	November 24 ^t , 2023
7	Nutrient Management	Up to 75%	\$12,000	November 24 ^t , 2023
8	Cover Crops	\$50/acre up to 50 acres	\$2,500	August 15th, 2024*

*Applications will be accepted in August 2023 for 2024 projects.

**Funding rates and ceilings are program guidelines only; funding ceilings and rates may be changed at the discretion of the Restoration Program Review Committee.

Section 5- Application Evaluation

Application forms and their supporting materials will be screened for completion to ensure they meet the eligibility requirements before being reviewed and ranked by NPCA staff. The potential project will be evaluated based on specific evaluation criteria for each project category (see Appendix A).

Projects that meet a minimum score of 60% through the evaluation process will be considered by the Restoration Program Committee for funding. Funding is contingent on available budget and other eligible applications.

Projects must have a direct environmental benefit to water quality, diverse habitat and forest cover resulting in measurable results (see Appendix). Project plans, developed with NPCA staff, will outline the performance measures meant to be achieved through the project. These may include; number of trees planted, hectares of wetland created, squared metres of riparian habitat enhanced, etc.

Preference will be given to projects in Priority Areas for water quality improvement, forest cover, and wetland habitat based on data and guidelines derived from the following documents:

- Annual NPCA Water Quality Reports, Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, 2007-2019.
- Nature for Niagara's Future Project; a Natural Heritage Systems Assessment; Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority, 2011.
- How Much Habitat is Enough? 3rd Edition; Environment Canada, 2013.
- Southern Ontario Wetland Conversion Analysis, Final Report; Ducks Unlimited Canada, March 2010.

Section 6 - Project Approval

Restoration staff will visit the project site with the applicant and the applicant will complete an application form. The potential project will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in Section 9 - Project Descriptions. The projects will be assessed, scored, and ranked against other eligible projects. Projects that are not selected may be considered for the following year. Project approval letters will be sent once a project has been approved.

Section 7 – Funding

Approved projects will receive **up to** 75% funding, **up to** the program category cap limit. The landowner and/or partner organization is responsible for the remaining 25% or greater of the costs. NPCA grant dollars may be combined with other funding (i.e., Ducks Unlimited, Forests Ontario). In cases where the applicant project is eligible for additional funding through a partner agency, the landowner will be required to enter into an conservation agreement with the partner agency to be eligible for the NPCA Restoration Grant. Where the NPCA and Partner Agencies have entered a Memorandum of Understanding, alternative funding models may be used.

Example 1. A reforestation project costs \$11,050. The NPCA grant covers 75% of the costs - \$8,287.50. The applicant is responsible for the remaining \$2,762.50.

Example 2. A manure storage project costs \$18,000. The NPCA grant would reach its program category cap limit of \$12,000. The applicant organization is responsible for the remaining \$6,000.

Example 3. A wetland creation project costs \$23,800. A partner agency will provide \$7,500 towards the cost of the project. The landowner will assist the NPCA by entering into a conservation agreement with the partner agency. The NPCA Grant and partner funding would cover 75% of the total project costs (\$17,850), the landowner is responsible for the remaining costs (\$ \$5,950)

Payment of project expenditures (contractors, project materials) will be dependent on project specifics, in some cases the landowner will pay the project costs and be reimbursed for the NPCA's contribution when the project is complete; in other cases, the NPCA will pay the project costs and the applicant will pay their contribution in two installments. In this case, a deposit at the beginning of the project and the remainder at project completion once all accounts are reconciled.

Section 8 - General Program Guidelines

To qualify for funding the following guidelines must be met:

- 1) Projects must be within the NPCA watershed (see Figure 1).

- 2) Projects must demonstrate improvement to local water quality, habitat and/or forest cover.
- 3) Projects that will result in the most significant benefits to water quality and habitat are prioritized for funding. Project approval will be based on a detailed evaluation with selection by members of an established technical advisory committee.
- 4) Landowners must contribute financially to the project.
- 5) Applicants must complete a Restoration Program application and sign a Landowner Agreement before the project commences.
- 6) **Eligible applicants will be required to enter into a conservation agreement with partner agencies to receive an NPCA Restoration Grant.**
- 7) The NPCA must review and approve all projects before project commencement.
- 8) Projects are to take place within the calendar year.
- 9) Landowners may have up to two active projects in any one year.
- 10) Projects that are ordered or are for compensation are not eligible for funding.
- 11) Project plant material (trees, shrubs, wildflowers) shall be native to Southern Ontario; non-native or invasive species are not eligible for funding.
- 12) Projects funded through the NPCA Restoration Grant Program will be subject to an administration fee.

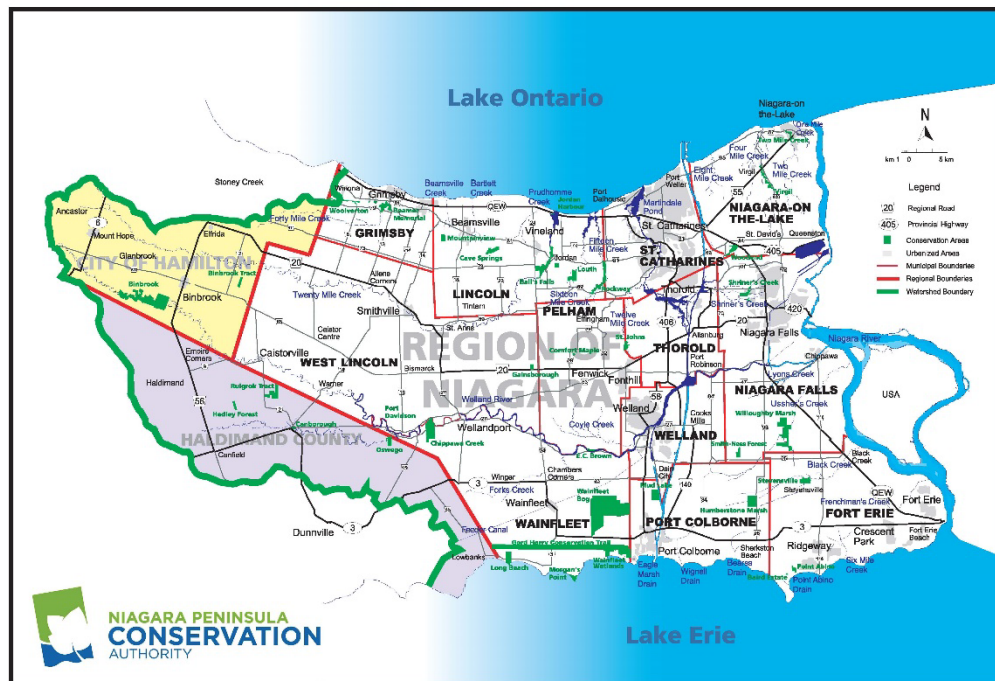


Figure 1. NPCA Watershed Boundary

Section 9 - Project Descriptions

See appendices for project category descriptions, eligible projects, requirements, and evaluation criteria.

