



# SCHUYLKILL RIVER RESTORATION FUND

## Guidelines for 2023 Grant Round

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### Goals and Purposes of Watershed Restoration grants

Watershed Restoration grants are available to non-profit organizations, watershed organizations, conservation districts and county, municipal and local governments to undertake implementation projects that will improve the quality and/or quantity of water in the Schuylkill River and its tributaries. The goal of the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund is to support projects in the Schuylkill River watershed that are consistent with restoration and water management goals for the entire basin.

### Funding Priorities

#### *Implementation Projects:*

General Funding Area – Funding will be given to projects that improve water quality and/or quantity in the Schuylkill River watershed resulting from abandoned mine drainage, agricultural runoff, and stormwater issues.

Focus Area 1: Perkiomen Creek - At least 10% of available Exelon funds *may be* targeted toward implementation projects within the Perkiomen watershed. Eligible projects in the Perkiomen Creek Watershed may include stormwater management, agricultural runoff mitigation, and pathogen remediation.

Focus Area 2: Philadelphia Water Supply - A portion of the available funds will be used for projects that are able to demonstrate protection of the Philadelphia drinking water supply. Eligible projects will address stormwater management, agriculture runoff and pathogen remediation within the drainage of, or in areas of significant influence on the Philadelphia drinking water supply in the Schuylkill River and the Schuylkill watershed in Philadelphia.

Focus Area 3: Source Water Protection – Projects that address source water protection and have a direct impact on drinking water and water supply for communities within the watershed. Projects should align with the objectives outlined in the Schuylkill Action Network Strategic Plan.

<https://www.schuylkillwaters.org/about-us/strategic-plan>

#### *Land Transaction Assistance Projects:*

These funds are directed to assist land trusts and conservation organizations with the transaction costs associated with the preservation of targeted lands within priority watersheds. A separate set of guidelines has been established for this program. Please contact the Schuylkill River Greenways for more information or visit [www.schuylkillriver.org](http://www.schuylkillriver.org) for full program guidelines.

## Evaluation Process

Projects will be evaluated in a two-step process that includes (1) a Letter of Intent followed by (2) an invitation to submit a full application if the Letter of Intent is recommended by the Advisory Committee. (Letter of Intent is not required for Land Transaction projects.)

## Criteria

Evaluation factors:

- The project's ability to improve the quality and/or quantity of water in the Schuylkill River
- The project exhibits high standards of planning and design, including implementation of Best Management Practices
- The relationship to previous watershed restoration efforts
- The project is consistent with local, state, federal, or other plans, for example, River Conservation Plans, Nutrient Management Plans, Act 167 plans, etc.
- The project is positioned for implementation with project design substantially complete and needing little or no additional planning
- The project is single-phased or in the final phase of implementation.
  - *Projects that will require multiple phases to have demonstrable effects on water quality and/or quantity will not be considered unless the submitted phase will result in measurable improvements*
- The project will require minimal monitoring following completion to demonstrate positive environmental effects
- The project will effectively leverage the resources of two or more partners, including a sponsoring partner with sufficient capacity to manage and complete the project.
- The project's ability to utilize volunteers
- The project's ability to positively engage and impact low income or underserved communities.
  - Along with our partners in the Schuylkill Action Network (SAN) the Fund is working to ensure our collaborative action benefits community members fairly across race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, income, age, or ability, with an added intent to connect historically disconnected communities. These and other values of the SAN can be found in their Strategic Plan. (See link in Funding Priorities section)
- The project exhibits innovative, green and sustainable approaches and design.
- Grant funds may not be used for projects being undertaken exclusively to meet state, federal or local regulations and requirements.
- It is expected that all projects will consider climate change issues during both the design and construction phases.

Please note that grant funds may not be used for land acquisition. Please refer to the guidelines for the Land Transaction Assistance Program for more information.

## Award Amounts

- Grant applicants may request between \$20,000 and \$100,000.
- Applicants working in the Perkiomen Creek Watershed may request between \$5,000 and \$100,000.
- Since the programs inception in 2006, the average grant award is approximately \$40,000.

## **Match Requirements**

- All projects require a minimum of 25% match.
- Cash and in-kind services are both eligible match sources. Projects showing high levels of match, above the 25% minimum, will be given priority in the ranking and grant award process.
- Matching funds can be derived from federal, state, local, private, and other non-governmental sources.

## **Grant Period**

All projects must be completed by December 31, 2023. A one-year extension may be requested but must be submitted in writing and approved by the Advisory Committee.

## **Eligible Expenses**

Grant funds may be used for the following purposes:

- Implementation: Includes labor, materials, signage, site preparation, permit fees, and any other direct costs.
- Project management: Up to 10% of the grant award may be utilized for direct costs associated with project management by the applicant or subcontractor.

Eligible project management expenses include:

- subcontractor/consultant fees, salary for organizational staff responsible for project implementation, travel, meeting expenses and other direct costs.
- If a project has remaining design issues that need to be completed prior to implementation, the review committee will consider this as an eligible expense on a case by case basis. However, the applicant must demonstrate that the project's implementation phase will still be completed during the three-year grant period.

## **Contractor Selection:**

All contractors working on projects funded by a grant through this program must be selected by a competitive process. Applicants who desire to use specific contractors not selected competitively, may request approval to do so from the Schuylkill River Greenways. The Schuylkill River Greenways reserves the right to review and approve all selected contractors.

## **Letter of Intent Process**

Organizations must submit a Letter of Intent through the Fund's online grant portal by the stated deadline. Access to the portal can be attained by contacting Tim Fenchel at [tfenchel@schuylkillriver.org](mailto:tfenchel@schuylkillriver.org) or through the Schuylkill River Greenways website at [www.schuylkillriver.org](http://www.schuylkillriver.org)

The Letter of Intent must include the following:

- Project Name and location
- Project Manager and contact information
- Brief summary of the project addressing why it is important and what the impact will be on the watershed.
- Objectives of the project and how it meets the program guidelines and criteria
- Letter should clearly communicate where the project stands in regards to design. Is the project design fully completed, in progress, or just in draft planning stage.
- Estimated grant request and matching fund sources

**Letter of Intent must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m. on February 16, 2023.**

### **Full Application Process**

Invited organizations will be required to complete the full application which will also be through the Fund's online grant portal. This application will include:

- A Cover Letter
- General Project Details
- Project Narrative
- Project Budget
- Attachments

**Applications must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. on April 13, 2023.**

\*\* Applicants who are invited to submit a full application will also be expected to present their proposed project to the Advisory Committee. These presentations will be held in May. A representative of the Schuylkill River Greenways will contact you to set up the presentation time.

#### **2023 Schuylkill River Restoration Fund Grant Timeline**

- January 10: Application materials available online at [www.schuylkillriver.org](http://www.schuylkillriver.org)
- February 16: Letters of Intent due by 4:00 p.m.
- March 10: Invitations to submit Full Application sent
- April 13: Final applications due by 4:00 p.m.

### **APRIL 13, 2023 DEADLINE**

**Full Applications are due and must be submitted through the online grant portal by 4:00 p.m. on April 13, 2023.**

**Any questions about the Schuylkill River Restoration Fund or the grant submission process should be directed to [tfenichel@schuylkillriver.org](mailto:tfenichel@schuylkillriver.org)**

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