



## Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild & Scenic Committee

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### Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild & Scenic Committee River Community Grants Program

The Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild & Scenic Committee (Committee) is pleased to announce the availability of our annual **Wild and Scenic River Community Grants**. This year, we are offering grants at two funding levels: several projects will be awarded up to **\$5,000** each, as in years past; additionally - new this year - we are also interested in larger projects, and anticipate awarding two projects for up to **\$10,000** each. These grants are intended to advance or support projects that protect and enhance the quality and enjoyment of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Wild and Scenic Rivers and their outstanding resources.

Towns, town-affiliated groups, and community-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations from the communities along and adjacent to the designated Wild and Scenic sections of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers (Lowell, Westfield, Troy, Jay, North Troy, Richford, Berkshire, Enosburgh, Enosburg Falls, and Montgomery) are invited to apply. Individuals interested in applying for funding must partner with a town or eligible 501(c)(3) organization, and provide a letter of support from this partner. Projects must address one or more of the goals of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Management Plan (available online at [www.vtwsr.org](http://www.vtwsr.org)).

#### **Deadline:**

Applications are due by **February 1, 2019**.

#### **Background:**

In December 2014, 46.1 miles of the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers were designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System based on their outstandingly remarkable resources, which include recreational opportunities, scenery, natural ecology, history and culture, and water quality. The Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild & Scenic Committee was formed to work in partnership with the National Park Service to protect and promote these resources. The Committee is made up of appointees from each of the eight local communities that these designated portions of the rivers flow through, as well as partners from local organizations and representatives from state and federal agencies.

This Committee is guided by the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Management Plan, and promotes the protection and enhancement of these resources through collaborative efforts, educational programs, and the statutory authority of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. By working in partnership with other interested parties, the Committee encourages cooperation and coordination on river issues.

#### **River Community Grants Program:**

Recognizing the importance that towns and local organizations play in the rivers' health and vitality, the goal of this grant program is to support activities that enhance and protect river resources and build strong local stewardship of the rivers. The Committee dedicates a portion of its annual budget to provide funds to local riverfront communities for sound, creative, or pro-active projects.

#### **Who May Apply:**

Eligible entities include, but are not limited to, planning boards, water/wastewater departments, conservation commissions, libraries, recreation departments, schools (including environmental clubs, art programs, science classes, etc.), and other town-sanctioned committees and boards. Community-based nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, such as historical societies, garden clubs, art associations, churches, local land trusts, and neighborhood groups, are also eligible. Individuals interested in applying should partner with either a town or nonprofit organization(s). The Committee may consider applications from nonprofit groups based outside the Wild and Scenic Communities when the project will directly benefit the Upper Missisquoi or Trout River resources and communities. These organizations are encouraged to consult the Committee before applying to discuss their eligibility.



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### **Eligible Projects:**

Projects that enhance or protect the outstanding resource values of recreation, scenery, natural ecology, history and/or culture, and water quality, and/or that increase awareness, appropriate use, and appreciation of these resource values are eligible. Possible project ideas include but are not limited to the following:

- Conservation, restoration, or enhancement of fish, wildlife, water quality, historic, or recreational resources
- Public education about the river and its resources and values
- Studies contributing to increased understanding and better management of river resources
- Promotion of recreation encouraging people to use and protect the rivers
- Protection of land or enhancement of soil health along the rivers and their tributaries
- Public art projects engaging the public and promote the river and its outstanding resource values
- Invasive species management
- Water conservation education and implementation
- Efforts to plan and manage for climate resiliency
- Protection of natural river flow regimes
- Projects engaging youth in the arts and sciences of river resources and encouraging an awareness and appreciation of river resources

Projects mandated as part of a regulatory requirement are not eligible. This may include mitigation for enforcement actions and/or permit requirements. If the proposed project is one where human health or safety is a concern, the applicant may be required to provide proof of insurance.

### **Funding:**

This year, grant requests will be considered at two funding levels: up to \$5,000 or up to \$10,000. There will be different grant requirements for each funding level (see below). Entities may apply for multiple grants, but the applications must be for discrete projects.

The Committee will also consider out-of-cycle proposals or partnering with organizations on projects that exceed our River Community Grants funding cap. Please contact us to discuss the value of such projects to our rivers.

At the \$5,000 level, up to \$40,000 will be distributed during the 2019 grant cycle. Funding may be used for work through December 31, 2019, though the Committee will consider extending beyond this date if the project timeline requires (i.e. if the project must be completed over the course of a full winter); applicants should explain the need for an extended timeline. Fifty percent of the award amount will be provided up front; the remainder will be received after the project has been completed and a final report has been submitted.

At the \$10,000 funding request level, up to \$20,000 will be distributed during the 2019 grant cycle. Funding should be used for work through December 31, 2019, but the Committee will allow for an extended timeline if the project necessitates; applicants should outline this extended timeline if it is anticipated. Fifty percent of the award amount will be provided up front; twenty-five percent will be provided after receipt of an interim report as outlined in a workplan; the remainder will be provided after the project has been completed, upon submittal of a final report.

The Missisquoi River Basin Association (MRBA) is the fiduciary agent for the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild & Scenic Committee and will be involved in this capacity only; the MRBA does not influence the decisions of the Committee nor the River Community Grants Program.



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### **Application Process:**

Interested parties are encouraged to contact the Committee prior to starting the applications process to confirm their eligibility and the appropriateness of the River Community Grants for their project. Applicants must fully complete the River Community Grants 2019 Application form; completed forms should be sent by email to [info@vtwsr.org](mailto:info@vtwsr.org). If electronic filing is a barrier to applying, please contact the Committee at 802-393-0076 to arrange an alternative to electronic filing.

Successful applicants will be notified of results of the selection process by early March 2018. The Committee reserves the right to ask an applicant to attend a monthly Committee meeting to further explain their application and/or project.

### **Review Criteria:**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria (in no particular order). Projects do not need to meet all criteria to be eligible; however, stronger proposals will be those that address many, if not all, of the following:

- Wild and Scenic Outstanding Resources/Goals of the Management Plan: Does the proposal address the protection, enhancement, or promotion of one or more of the rivers' outstanding resource values or advance the goals laid out in the Management Plan?
- Thoroughness of planning: Does the plan provide enough detail to show that all resources required - both financial and human - will be available to complete the project in the proposed timeline?
- Measureable Outcomes: Does the applicant have a plan to evaluate the project's effectiveness and impact (relative to the project goals)?
- Community Support: Is there demonstrated support for this project from all involved parties?
- Partnership: Does the project engage partners and/or raise public awareness about the rivers?
- Leveraging of Additional Resources: Are there matching funds or in-kind contributions to the project? These are strongly encouraged but not required.
- Experience and Capability: Does the proposal demonstrate sufficient experience or available expertise needed to complete the project (either from the applicant or through partners or contractors)?
- Longevity/Sustainability: Are results of the project sustainable after completion of the grant? Is there a plan for ongoing maintenance or work, if relevant? Will future activities/decisions at the community, municipal, regional, or state level build on the results of the proposed project? How will sufficient funds be raised to continue or maintain the outcome of this project?

### **For further information, or to obtain a hard copy of the Management Plan:**

Contact Lindsey Wight at 802-393-0076 or [info@vtwsr.org](mailto:info@vtwsr.org).