Landowner Action Fund

program guide

Grants for your land and water projects

Credit Valley Conservation
inspired by nature

Landowner Action Fund

The Landowner Action Fund is an environmental incentive program for rural landowners living within the Credit River watershed. The program provides financial and technical assistance to landowners for projects that will protect our water sources, build the resilience of our natural systems to climate change and improve habitat for fish and wildlife.

Funding is available for eligible landowners who plan and implement stewardship projects under the following categories:

- **Land Enhancement**
- **Wetland, Stream and Pond Enhancement**
- **Groundwater Protection**
- **Consulting Fees and Innovative Projects**

Project grants of between 30 per cent and 100 per cent of eligible project costs up to a maximum grant amount are available. Grant rates are determined based on an evaluation of the project's impact on the environmental health of the watershed. Once the project is fully paid for by the applicant, the Landowner Action Fund grant is paid to the landowner.

Are you eligible?

The Landowner Action Fund provides incentives to non-farm landowners, small equine operators and hobby farmers that are not eligible for funding through existing farm-based stewardship programs. It also provides incentives to registered farm operators in Halton where no local farm-based incentive program exists.

To be eligible, landowners must meet the above criteria and live in the middle or upper Credit River watershed on a property of one or more acres. For properties less than one acre some exceptions may be made given the environmental merit of the proposed project.

How to apply for funding

The Landowner Action Fund is part of an overall program to build the capacity of landowners to engage in stewardship actions on their properties. To become eligible to apply, participants attend an educational workshop and conduct an assessment of their property management practices.

Application Process

If you are a rural non-farm landowner or hobby farm operator:	If you are a small equine operator (non-commercial):	If you have a registered farm business in Halton:
1 Attend a *Caring for Your Land and Water workshop*	Attend a *Caring for Your Horse and Farm workshop*	Attend an *Environmental Farm Plan (EFP) workshop*
2 Complete required and applicable worksheets in *Your Guide to Caring for the Credit**	Complete required and applicable worksheets in the *Horse Owner Stewardship Guide**	Complete applicable worksheets in the *EFP Workbook*
3 Create a Landowner Action Plan based on the worksheet assessment	Create a Landowner Action Plan based on the worksheet assessment	Create an Action Plan based on the worksheet assessment
4 Request a site visit to discuss potential projects		
5 Complete and submit an application to the Landowner Action Fund		

***Some worksheets included in the guide are mandatory, other worksheets are only required if applicable to the applicant's property. Applicants must complete all worksheets that apply to their situation. For guidance on Action Plan completion to meet the Landowner Action Fund eligibility requirements contact a Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) Stewardship Coordinator.**

The Landowner Action Plan or Environmental Farm Plan assists applicants in identifying and prioritizing projects that will move their worksheet scores from a "1 (poor)" or "2 (fair)" rating towards a "3 (good)" or "4 (best)" rating.

The Landowner Action Fund does not provide support for projects on public property or property managed by publicly owned organizations and agencies.

Either the property owner or tenant can apply, however signatures from both are required on the application. Partnerships or corporations are considered to be a single applicant.

Applicants are required to submit a detailed project budget with their funding application, including copies of quotes from their preferred service provider(s). Several quotes are recommended (CVC reserves the right to request multiple quotes). Where a project grant could exceed $5,000, a rationale for the preferred choice supplier must be included with the application.

Applicants currently in violation of CVC's Regulation will not be considered for funding. Projects proposed due to a work order because of a violation of any other federal or provincial legislation or municipal by-law are ineligible for funding.

Projects required by legislation as a result of land or infrastructure development or resource extraction activities are ineligible for funding (e.g. mitigation, compensation, site rehabilitation).

Can you apply for more than one project, taking place over multiple years?

Yes and yes! In some cases, separate application forms should be submitted.

Eligible Projects

Detailed project factsheets are available on our website. Please review before applying for funding.

Table 1

Land Enhancement Projects

Projects that restore or enhance land habitat and biodiversity.

Eligible Projects	Grant Rates *
NATURALIZATION Tree and shrub planting projects that enhance biodiversity, improve wildlife habitat and create connections between natural areas (includes windbreaks and shelter belts)	
CVC Potted Plants Program Subsidy Minimum two acres of property and planting 100 plants	60 - 85%. Projects that are primarily visual barriers are funded at 50%
Landowner Action Fund Potted Plants Program Top-up Provides a top-up to the CVC Potted Plants Program Subsidy	50 - 100% of remaining project costs up to $5,000
Landowner Action Fund Naturalization Grant Properties smaller than two acres or plantings fewer than 100 plants	50 - 100% up to $2,500
REFORESTATION Tree seedling planting projects that create or extend forested areas	
CVC Tree Seedling Program Subsidy Minimum two acres of property and minimum 1,500 seedlings	up to 90%
Landowner Action Fund Tree Seedling Program Top-up Provides a top-up to the CVC Tree Seedling Program Subsidy	50 - 100% of remaining project costs up to $1,000
FOREST MANAGEMENT Activities to encourage forest health	
Preparation of Forest Management Plans, Inventories, Prescriptions, Tree Marking, Vegetation Management	50% up to $1,000
Non-Commercial Thinning	30 - 65% up to $6,000
HABITAT ENHANCEMENT	
Native Grassland Restoration Projects must be greater than 0.5 acres	50 - 100% up to $15,000, and a $2,000 per acre cap
Pollinator Patch Creation Projects are less than or equal to 0.5 acres	50 - 100% up to $1,500
Sustainable Gardening and Plant Selection Purchase of native plants for gardens	50% up to $200 (One-time use only)
Habitat Structures Nesting and shelter structures for wildlife	50% up to $1000
Invasive Plant Species Management Inventory, management plans and removal Note: To ensure project success funding is only provided to landowners who commit to a multi-year treatment plan. Grant cap also applies to the property for this category.	50 - 100% up to $6,000

* Grants are subject to change. Where a range is indicated, the per cent grant will be determined during the project application review process.

Table 2

Wetland, Stream and Pond Enhancement Projects

Projects that restore or enhance aquatic habitat and water quality of wetlands, streams and ponds (Dredging and pond creation are not eligible).

Eligible Projects	Grant Rates *
NATURALIZATION Projects that increase or establish natural buffers next to wetlands, streams, ponds and headwater drainage areas and improve water quality or aquatic habitat (applies only to approved native species)	
CVC Potted Plants Program Subsidy Minimum two acres of property and planting 100 plants	60 - 85%. Projects that are primarily visual barriers are funded at 50%
Landowner Action Fund Potted Plants Program Top-up Provides a top-up to the CVC Potted Plants Program Subsidy	50 - 100% of remaining project costs up to $5,000
Landowner Action Fund Naturalization Grant Properties smaller than two acres or plantings fewer than 100 plants	50 - 100% up to $2,500
POND OR STREAM ENHANCEMENTS Projects that restore or enhance aquatic habitat and water quality of wetlands, streams and ponds (Dredging and pond creation are not eligible).	
Aquatic and Vegetation Planting	50 - 100% up to $1,000
Stream Bank Stabilization To reduce non-natural soil and stream bank erosion	50 - 100% up to $1,000
On-Line Pond Retrofits and Dam Decommissioning	50 - 100% up to $10,000
In-stream Restoration Includes habitat structures, channel narrowing and improving fish passage	50 - 100% up to $1,500
Wetland Restoration and Rehabilitation	50 - 100% up to $10,000
Invasive Plant Species Management Inventory, management plans and removal Note: To ensure project success funding is only provided to landowners who commit to a multi-year treatment plan. Grant cap also applies to the property for this category.	50 - 100% up to $6,000

* Grants are subject to change. Where a range is indicated, the per cent grant will be determined during the project application review process.

Table 3

Groundwater Protection Projects

Eligible Projects	Grant Rates *
Septic System Repair, Upgrade or Decommission Note: Funds are available on a limited basis and not in all municipalities.	50% up to $4,000
Private Well Upgrade	50% up to $500
Private Well Decommissioning**	50% up to $1,500

Table 4

Other Projects

Eligible Projects	Grant Rates *
Consulting Fees Preliminary site plans or studies to determine project feasibility	50 - 100% up to $2,500
Innovative Projects Support for other projects (not previously listed)	50 - 100% up to $2,500

*Grants are subject to change. Where a range is indicated, the per cent grant will be determined during the project application review process.
**Top-ups are applied to eligible municipal well decommissioning programs and contribute to a percentage of the landowner's portion of the project cost.

When can you apply?

Project applications can be submitted throughout the year. You are encouraged to contact Program staff before starting your project to verify it meets Program guidelines. If you have completed a project in the past six months, you may still be eligible to apply. Contact Program staff for more information.

How is your funding application reviewed?

Applications are evaluated using science-based criteria to assess the environmental merit of the project. If approved, projects are awarded grants of 30 to 100 per cent of project costs depending on the project category and the project's benefit to the environmental health of the Credit River watershed. The application review and approvals process can take up to 60 days.

Funding Considerations

Where other funding sources exist, such as Municipal Well Decommissioning Programs or other municipal, provincial or federal funding programs, applicants will be required to pursue these opportunities first. This requirement may be waived, however, where the Landowner Action Fund grant is needed to leverage additional project funds.

If other funding is secured, it will be applied to a project budget, reducing total project costs, before the Landowner Action Fund grant amount is calculated.

What happens when your application is approved?

If your project is approved, you will be sent a letter outlining your grant rate (percentage of total cost) and maximum grant amount. Project approvals and funding rates are subject to funding availability. All funding decisions are final.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all necessary approvals and permits are obtained for the proposed project(s) (i.e. building permits and permits from other agencies) and for hiring qualified industry professionals where CVC services are not used. The applicant is responsible for paying all project costs up front.

Grant Payment

Applicants have one year from the date of approval of their application to complete their project (some exceptions may apply). When the project is completed, a follow-up site visit with a CVC Stewardship Coordinator is required.

Upon project completion, the applicant must submit copies of all necessary approvals, permits and proof of payment for all eligible costs to CVC. Final project submission should include any applicable photos. Once reviewed and approved by CVC, a grant cheque will be issued.

What project costs are eligible for funding?

Eligible Costs

Proof of purchase for eligible costs for reimbursement must be submitted to CVC when the project is completed. Eligible costs include:

- Required permits (CVC permit fees will be waived for the restoration portion of the project only)
- Purchased project materials
- Contract labour
- Professional fees (e.g. inventory, design/ site plan, construction and supervision)

Ineligible Costs

Ineligible costs are not eligible for reimbursement and do not have to be submitted. Ineligible costs include:

- Expenses associated with projects completed more than six months before the submission of a completed Landowner Action Fund application.
- The labour, machinery or equipment of the applicant or the applicant's family or business. (Applicants are encouraged to contribute labour, machinery or equipment but these are not eligible for reimbursement.)
- Expenses associated with building expansions, renovations and/or new construction (e.g. new septic systems or septic upgrades needed as a result of a home expansion).
- Expenses related to the project but not directly part of its environmental improvements (e.g. a foot bridge), unless approved by CVC.
- HST, if the applicant is entitled to an HST rebate.
- Expenses incurred due to aesthetic considerations rather than environmental benefits.

The above are considered general guidelines for eligible and ineligible costs. Read the applicable project factsheet for eligible and ineligible costs specific to your project.

Ready to get started?

Contact:

Rural Homeowners and Businesses:

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