



**STATE OF NEW MEXICO**  
**ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT**  
**RIVER STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)s**



#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1.	What is the source of the River Stewardship Program funding and how much is currently available?	The New Mexico Legislature appropriated \$1 million in capital outlay funding to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) during the 2015 Special Session “for the restoration of rivers and streams statewide, including clearing vegetation, lowering river bank lines, replanting native species vegetation and installing erosion control measures.” This appropriation was in response to the New Mexico Environment Department’s request to fund the River Stewardship Program in order to continue to address a critical surface water quality need for New Mexico and to ensure that New Mexico continues to receive federal Clean Water Act Funds. The reversion date for the funds is June 30, 2019.
2.	What is the minimum and maximum project amount that the River Stewardship Program will fund?	NMED intends to fund several projects throughout the state and has not set minimum and maximum project amounts. With prior state river restoration funding, the average project amount was \$180,000 with a range of \$37,000 to \$518,000.
3.	How will the projects be selected?	NMED will follow the state procurement rules. A Request for Proposals will be issued in approximately October 2015 and applicants will have approximately eight weeks to prepare proposals. Proposals will be selected based on their merits. An evaluation committee will rank proposals based on evaluation criteria stated within the RFP.
4.	Who is eligible to apply for funding?	There is broad eligibility for applying for funding. Eligible Offerors include: towns, cities, counties, soil and water conservation districts, irrigation districts, for-profit and not-for profit organizations, Indian Nations, Pueblos and Tribes. Federal and state agencies are not eligible. In order to establish a contract with the State of New Mexico, an Offeror must register as a vendor for the state with the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration and either: be a registered business with the New Mexico Taxation and Revenue Department; or be a non-profit organization registered with the US Department of Internal Revenue Service and NM Attorney General’s office; or be a government entity.
5.	What are the priority areas for funding?	NMED has identified three priority areas (see program priority map): <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Projects that address water quality and stream habitat impacts associated with fires in 2011, 2012, or 2013;</li><li>• Projects that advance source water protection of public drinking water supplies that utilize surface water; and</li><li>• Projects that improve urban water quality and stream habitat.</li></ul>

6.	How is “urban area” defined?	“Urban area” is based on 2010 census data. For a map of urban areas, go to the NMED’s interactive SWQB Mapper at <a href="https://gis.web.env.nm.gov/SWQB">https://gis.web.env.nm.gov/SWQB</a> . Turn on the urban areas by clicking the box in the upper left corner on the screen. The urban areas will appear in grey. Zoom into the SWQB Mapper by using the +/- tool.
7.	What if my project is not in a priority area, should I still submit a proposal?	If your project meets the program objectives but is not in a priority area you should still consider submitting a proposal.
8.	What kind of projects will be funded?	NMED is seeking projects that improve surface water quality or river habitat within a waterway or its associated riparian area or floodplain through on-the-ground activities that may be accompanied by changes in land management.
9.	Are projects on government lands eligible?	Yes, projects on government lands are eligible.
10.	Are projects on private lands eligible?	Projects on private lands may be eligible if they pass an anti-donation clause review by the Evaluation Committee and State Board of Finance.
11.	What costs are allowable for reimbursement with River Stewardship Program Funds?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Design</li> <li>● Permitting</li> <li>● Construction</li> <li>● Pre-and post-implementation monitoring</li> <li>● Property acquisition (title must be held by a government entity)</li> <li>● Supplies that are permanently affixed to the project</li> <li>● Hourly wages for direct work on the project</li> <li>● Equipment rental</li> </ul>
12.	What costs are not allowable for reimbursement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Education and outreach</li> <li>● Salaries or percentage of salaries</li> <li>● Wages for government employees</li> <li>● Equipment or supplies that are not permanently affixed to the project</li> <li>● Ongoing maintenance</li> </ul>
13.	Will letters of support be required for submission of a project?	Letters of support are not required, but are highly recommended. In particular letters of support from local governments documenting the community need, involvement and support of the project as well as letters from applicable landowner(s), land management agencies, and other partners help document cooperator support related to proposal evaluation criteria.
14.	How will the funding be distributed once the projects are selected?	NMED will establish reimbursable contracts or government agreements. The New Mexico state procurement rules require that NMED operate on a reimbursable basis with submittal of invoices and documentation of valid expenditures.

15.	Is there a match requirement that a Contractor must contribute in order to receive River Stewardship Program funds?	No, there is not a requirement for identifying and tracking matching funds. However, we encourage proposals that provide some level of outside funds to allow for ongoing maintenance or adaptive management; education and outreach; and longer term monitoring – which are not allowable expenses for reimbursement under this funding source.
16.	Can a Contractor that receives River Stewardship Program funding use the funding as match to leverage other grants?	No, NMED intends to use the River Stewardship Program funding to match EPA Clean Water Act grants that are awarded to the State of New Mexico.
17.	What is the expiration date on the funds?	The timeline for use of severance tax bonds is four years. The bonds are anticipated to be sold in June 2014 and will revert June 30, 2018.
18.	Can River Stewardship Program funds be used to pay for obtaining project permits?	Yes, the permitting is considered to be part of design activities. Permitting requirements will vary based on location and land ownership and should be thoroughly investigated during the pre-proposal planning process. Depending on project specifics, there may be several compliance or permitting requirements for example: Clean Water Act 404/401 permitting and certification; State Historic Preservation Act consultation, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance; Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation; local floodplain ordinances; and water rights permitting.
19.	Can River Stewardship funds be used to pay for planning?	Funds can be used to pay for planning within the context of completing an on-the-ground restoration project but not for planning as the exclusive end product (such as developing a watershed plan).
20.	Can River Stewardship Program funding be used to acquire land or conservation easements?	No, NMED does not intend to use the funding to acquire property.
21.	Can River Stewardship funding be used to lease or purchase water rights?	The lease or purchase of water rights can be considered as part of a physical project.

22.	Who should we consult with while developing a project?	You should consult with local governments, land managers, property owners and other stakeholders while planning a project. It is crucial to the success of your proposal that you demonstrate the support and commitment of the community and applicable stakeholders – especially any organization, agency or person that will be providing site access, personnel time, or resources to the project.
23.	Who do I contact with questions about the RFP?	<p>For questions about the River Stewardship Program before the RFP is released, please contact Karen Menetrey (505) 827-0194 (<a href="mailto:Karen.Menetrey@state.nm.us">Karen.Menetrey@state.nm.us</a>) or Abe Franklin (505) 827-2793 (<a href="mailto:Abraham.Franklin@state.nm.us">Abraham.Franklin@state.nm.us</a>).</p> <p>During the RFP, any inquiries to the State of New Mexico should be submitted, in writing, to the Procurement Manager identified in the RFP, via email. Offerors may contact ONLY the Procurement Manager regarding the RFP. Other state employees or Evaluation Committee members will not have the authority to respond on behalf of the State.</p>
24.	Will NMED consider proposals that address stream reaches that are currently attaining water quality standards for their designated uses?	Yes. The River Stewardship Program is not limited to impaired reaches.
25.	Does my project have to be in an area with an EPA-approved watershed based plan?	No. The RFP will ask for a reference to a planning document in order to justify need and support for the project, but the planning document does not have to be an EPA watershed-based plan. Natural resource planning documents developed by local, state, federal and tribal agencies are examples of other types of valid planning documents.
26.	What distinguishes the River Stewardship Program from former state river restoration efforts?	<p>The River Stewardship Program builds on the success of past efforts; however this program has several differences that distinguish it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater consideration of economic benefits of healthy river systems, such as improved opportunities to hunt, fish and float.</li> <li>• Emphasis on restoring or maintaining hydrology of streams and rivers, where feasible, to better handle overbank flows and thus reduce flooding downstream as experienced in recently burned watersheds.</li> </ul> <p>Program aligned to directly complement match required for federal grants ensuring New Mexico continues to receive these funds.</p>

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