



MNRCP Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Does MNRCP require matching funds?

A. No, matching funds are not required. Applicants can apply for up to 100% of project funding from MNRCP. However, additional funds from applicants and other partners are viewed favorably and may help projects score better in the review process.

Q. Can MNRCP funds be used as non-federal match?

A. It depends on the federal program. Some federal funding programs (such as North American Wetlands Conservation Act [NAWCA], Community Forest Program, and National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grants) do not allow the use of mitigation funds as non-federal match. MNRCP funds are considered mitigation funds and are therefore not allowed to be used as non-federal match for some programs. MNRCP funds may also be considered federal funds, depending on the source of the funds paid into the program. We recommend you contact the federal grant program you are considering for more information.

Q. Can MNRCP funds be combined with Land for Maine's Future (LMF) funds?

A. It is possible to combine MNRCP funds with LMF funds, but the ability to do this will be project-specific. Both programs have different goals and requirements and some projects may not be compatible with both funding sources. If a project sponsor is contemplating requesting funding from both programs, we recommend talking with representatives from each program before the funding rounds begin to identify potential incompatibilities early on.

Q. Can MNRCP funds be used for culvert replacements or fishways to improve fish passage?

A. Projects that are solely focused on fish passage (e.g., fish ladders, nature-like fishways, etc.) are generally not supported by MNRCP. While MNRCP has provided funding in the past for a limited number of fish passage projects, the Corps and DEP have determined that, moving forward, all such projects must restore broader ecological benefits to river and stream systems (beyond passing fish), and provide some measures to ensure the permanence of the work (not necessarily requiring preservation). As a compensatory mitigation program, MNRCP must award funds to projects that result in conservation outcomes for aquatic resources that have been impacted by permitted development activities. Currently, MNRCP is not accepting payments into the program for stream impacts. However, recent legislation will allow for stream impact projects to pay into the program, which may result in more funding being available for more stream focused projects in the future. Culvert replacement projects are generally uncommon but may be funded if the project demonstrates restoration or enhancement of wetland functions and values beyond just passing fish. Dam removal and culvert removal projects are eligible for funding and are encouraged.





Q. Can MNRCP funds be used to reimburse the costs of a prior land acquisition?

A. No, MNRCP funds cannot be used for reimbursement of costs for land that is currently owned by a conservation entity.

Q. Can MNRCP funding be used to cover stewardship and long-term monitoring costs?

A. Yes, but the funds need to be restricted to the parcel/project relevant to the MNRCP application and award and must be deemed reasonable by MNRCP reviewers.

Q. Can costs to obtain state and federal permits for restoration work be included in the budget?

A. Yes. Federal, state, and/or local permits may be required for certain restoration and enhancement projects and costs to prepare permit applications can be included in the MNRCP project budget. Please note, however, that MNRCP restrictions may be different than what is allowed by permit; therefore, consultation with MNRCP is recommended prior to seeking permits from regulatory agencies.

Q. Can fees for consultants to prepare project plans/designs be included in the budget?

A. Yes, however, the design fees must be for a project for which you are currently seeking funding to implement. You cannot apply for MNRCP funding for the design phase of a project only. The design and implementation costs must be included in the same application.

Q. Are complete design/engineering plans required for the proposal phase for restoration projects?

A. No, but proposals should include at least a conceptual or preliminary plan to describe the proposed work.

Q. Can MNRCP provide a list of qualified consultants for wetland restoration work?

A. MNRCP cannot specifically recommend a consultant or contractor. You can find a Directory of Environmental Consultants on the Maine Association of Wetland Scientists website (www.mainewetlands.org). A link to the directory is provided in the "Quick Links" section of the home page. A list of consultants is also available on the Maine Land Trust Network website (<https://www.mlttn.org/resources/consultants/>).

Q. How much wetland and/or upland is required on a preservation project? All wetland? All upland? A combination?

A. There is no set rule, but successful projects generally protect both wetlands and an upland buffer. Projects that protect areas under demonstrable threat (i.e., accessible from roads, within potential development areas, under threat from some activity other than development, etc.) will score higher. A parcel that is almost all wetland may not be scored as well by MNRCP reviewers





since wetlands have a level of protection under state and federal law and the threat of direct impact to them is less. Additionally, upland buffers are important to maintain the integrity of aquatic resources by providing protection from secondary and indirect impacts and are considered an important part of preserving these resources.

Q. Is forestry allowed on parcels protected with MNRCP funds?

A. Forestry may be allowed for some projects but with conditions ensuring wetland habitat protections. For example, any forestry must be done in a sustainable manner and must avoid protected natural resources and their associated buffers. MNRCP has developed Riparian Habitat Management Guidelines that provide information on forestry activities within designated buffers of protected natural resources. In short, forestry is not allowed within a minimum of 100 feet from any wetland or stream, and additional restrictions may apply up to 600 feet or more from some resources. Forestry *may* be allowed within large areas of upland forest that are accessible without impacting protected natural resources, depending on the specifics of the project. A forest management plan is required and will be reviewed by MNRCP reviewers. It is also worth noting that proposing forestry as part of a project proposal may reduce the score and ranking of the project and reduce the chance of the project being funded. There may also be projects where MNRCP reviewers determine that forestry is not suitable in any area and will prohibit any forestry as a condition of the award.

Q. Is public access/recreation allowed on parcels obtained with MNRCP funds?

A. Yes, access for low-impact recreational uses such as hiking, hunting, and fishing is allowed (but not required), as long as the recreational uses, trails and any other infrastructure do not negatively impact natural resources or significantly disturb associated upland buffers being protected with MNRCP funds. Overnight camping, however, is generally not allowed.

Q. Is vehicle access allowed on MNRCP parcels?

A. Vehicle access for maintenance or other uses is generally allowed, as long as it is on existing roads and no new roads are proposed. Access for snowmobile use may be allowed depending on the location of designated trails. Access for ATVs is generally not allowed.

Q. Are appraisals, surveys, environmental assessments, and other due diligence required to be completed prior to submitting an MNRCP application?

A. No, a complete appraisal, survey, purchase and sale agreement, or environmental assessment is not required to be completed for the application process. However, if these items are complete and included in the application, it may increase the "Project Readiness" score for the project. If funds are awarded for a preservation project, appraisals and environmental assessments must have been completed within one year of closing. A formal land survey is required, but older surveys may be permitted if they have been confirmed recently by a licensed surveyor.

