

NEW HAMPSHIRE AQUATIC RESOURCE MITIGATION FUND

2024 GRANT PROGRAM

GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTIONS



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ACRONYMS

Acronym

Definition

AOP	Aquatic Organism Passage
ARM Fund	Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
G&C	Governor & Council
ILF	In-lieu Fee
NHDES	New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services
NHFG	New Hampshire Fish & Game Department
NRCS	U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Services
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
RFP	Request for Proposals
SVAP	Stream Visual Assessment Protocol
SSC	Site Selection Committee
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
WAP	New Hampshire Wildlife Action Plan

OVERVIEW

This document provides information about the NHDES Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund Program (ARM Fund) and contains details on funding availability, the grant timeline, project/applicant/cost eligibility, evaluation criteria, as well as templates for grant applicants. The appendices include a project budget template and a reference checklist which provides an overview of requirements at different stages of the grant process. Submitting a pre-proposal for review by the ARM Site Selection Committee (SSC) and obtaining feedback for the full proposal, are necessary steps in the application process. The [pre-proposal](#) application is online and available. The full proposal application will be posted soon.

BACKGROUND

The ARM Fund is the in-lieu Fee (ILF) compensatory mitigation option available to permittees for impacts to wetlands, streams and other aquatic resources in New Hampshire. It is only available once avoidance and minimization of impacts has occurred. As the ILF sponsor, the NHDES ARM Fund Program holds and manages the collected funds and announces a grant round (sometimes called a Request for Proposals) annually. Competitive grants are available across [nine watersheds called Service Areas](#).

The SSC includes four state and five non-governmental agencies. The SSC scores grant proposals using set [evaluation criteria](#) (Appendix A) and recommends awards to the New Hampshire Wetlands Council and the federal Interagency Review Team (IRT) composed of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Marine Fisheries Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Fund awards must also be approved by the Governor and Executive Council (G&C) before being disbursed. For more information on the ARM Program's structure, responsibilities, standards for the use, operation and maintenance of the ARM Fund in compliance with the Federal Mitigation Rule, please review the Final [ARM Fund Program In-Lieu Fee Instrument](#) (published 2023).

The primary goal of the ARM Fund is to provide sustainable compensatory mitigation meeting the federal goal of "no net loss" of [functions and values of waters and wetlands](#). Since the ARM Fund began in 2006, 311 wetlands permit recipients have used it for compensatory mitigation. These mitigation funds have been used to support projects that restore, enhance and preserve aquatic resources and their upland buffers. To date, \$26,364,141 in grants have funded 142 projects and resulted in a total of 28,080 acres of conserved land, 4,048 acres of protected wetlands, 422 protected vernal pools, five acres of restored/enhanced tidal waters and 70 miles of fish passage and aquatic connectivity.

The ARM Fund supports the restoration, enhancement, establishment and, in certain circumstances, preservation of ecologically important projects or lands that will effectively sustain aquatic resource functions in the watershed for the long term. Historically, the ARM Fund has been highly successful in the preservation of aquatic resources and their buffers, however, preservation alone cannot replace lost functions, values or acreage. In 2023 and 2024, the ARM Fund has been working to better define restoration goals and the limited preservation-only projects which will be eligible for funds.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any New Hampshire municipality, county government, regional planning commission, county conservation district, watershed or river association, state agency, institution of higher education, public school district and nonprofit or for-profit organization is eligible provided the projects are consistent with this request for proposals and meet the terms and conditions required for G&C approval. Projects score higher with the support of the host municipality's conservation commission or Selectboard/City Council as documented clearly in a letter or meeting minutes where a vote was taken to proceed with the proposal. Partnerships among stakeholders are encouraged. We acknowledge that consultants such as wetland scientists, engineers and fluvial geomorphologists may be needed to complete the application.

MATCHING GRANT FUNDS

ARM grants do not require matching funds. However, projects score higher with secured, or potential, matching funds and in-kind services. Applicants are encouraged to pursue partnerships, as it is often a key to project success. ARM funds cannot be used as a non-federal match for other grants that require non-federal monies because ARM funds are considered federal mitigation funds. Please consult with ARM staff or other funding sources if you are uncertain about the matching requirements for a particular funding program.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The 2024 ARM Fund grant round is prioritizing funding for projects that support aquatic resource restoration, enhancement, establishment, and in certain circumstances, preservation to offset lost functions and values authorized by state and federal permit decisions. The goal is for funded projects to be self-sustaining, natural systems within the landscape and climate in which they are located, with little or no ongoing maintenance needs or hydrologic manipulation.

The ARM Fund is targeting non-tidal and tidal wetland and stream projects that will compensate for lost functions in five Service Areas, where funding is currently available. Please review the following section for project eligibility criteria. For a breakdown of funding and goals in each Service Area, please refer to the Ledger and Service Area Map.

Opportunities to restore, enhance or protect the functions of aquatic resources in NH can take a variety of forms. Please consider that proposals on existing conservation land or as new phases of former ARM-funded projects are eligible and encouraged.

Although a function or condition assessment of the aquatic resources is not a pre-requisite for pre-proposals, these assessments are valuable tools in the planning process. An assessment can identify which functions are missing or impaired, and thereby assist with identifying restoration or enhancement targets. Likewise, aquatic resources providing optimal functions are ideal targets for preservation.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Criteria for ALL Restoration/Enhancement/Establishment Projects

- Result in a measurable aquatic resource lift and increase in functions at the landscape and watershed scale.
- Include at least five years of monitoring and budget for adaptive management to ensure project goal/objectives and performance standards are achieved.
- Include a permanent legal protection such as fee transfer or conservation easement, restrictive covenant or deed restriction with third party enforcement (preferred) that encompass all restoration areas and targeted aquatic resources and upland buffer protections, as appropriate, to ensure long-term sustainability and protection in perpetuity. The required conditions and use limitations are described in ARM's standard [Conservation Easement Template](#). Stream restoration projects may have more flexibility.
- Comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Avoid adverse impacts to habitats that already have valuable aquatic functions.
- For full proposals, include a wetland delineation, wetland classifications and wetland functional assessment/condition report for aquatic resources in the project scope. Demonstration of success is contingent on pre- and post- assessments and successful achievement of performance standards and project goals.

1. For Wetland Restoration/Enhancement Projects

Funding is available to restore the functions of degraded or altered wetlands that meet the criteria for all projects above and that include any of the following goals.

- Reversing impacts to aquatic resources due to historic or permitted land alteration including fill and alteration of hydrology (e.g., fill for agriculture, Class VI roads, logging roads).
- Restoring aquatic organism passage by reconnecting impassable or degraded aquatic habitat.
- Restoration of hydrology in a degraded system.
- Enhancing degraded aquatic resources through vegetative plantings and invasive management.
- Removing hard armoring (e.g., riprap, bulkhead, seawall).
- Removing a barrier that results in wetland restoration within the barrier footprint and/or former impoundment.
- Benefiting wildlife in wetlands through targeted on-site enhancement measures.
- [Living shoreline](#) and habitat creation projects in coastal wetlands.

2. For Stream Restoration/Enhancement Projects

Funding is available to restore the functions of degraded or altered streams and rivers that meet the criteria for all projects above and that include any of the following goals. Some wetland project goals apply to stream projects and are repeated here, in addition to stream-specific targets. *Note: The ARM Fund considers bank stabilization a secondary outcome of a successful restoration project, not a restoration objective on its own.*

- Restoring bedform diversity, natural flow regimes and lateral connectivity.
- Restoration of hydrology in a degraded system.
- Daylighting streams.
- Enhancing stream function through bioengineering.
- Improving floodplain function by re-establishing floodplain connectivity.
- Improving water quality by eliminating or reducing indirect discharges.
- Installing livestock exclusion measures.
- Removing a barrier that results in stream restoration within the barrier footprint and former impoundment, as well as downstream channel improvements.
- Achieving barrier removal through infrastructure replacements designed in accordance with the NH Stream Crossing Guidelines (2009), Chapter III, Design Guidelines for New Stream Crossings (e.g., hydraulic, geomorphic compatibility).
- Reversing impacts to aquatic resources due to historic or permitted river/stream dredging, diversion or channel straightening.
- Restoring aquatic organism passage by reconnecting impassable or degraded aquatic habitat.
- Enhancing degraded aquatic resources and riparian buffers through vegetative plantings and invasive management.
- Removing hard armoring (e.g., riprap, channel lining).
- Benefiting aquatic wildlife, hydrology and water quality through targeted on-site in-stream enhancement measures such as strategic wood additions

3. For Wetland Establishment (creation) Projects

Funding is available to establish aquatic resources in uplands provided the project meets the criteria for all projects above and includes any of the following goals.

- Establishing vernal pools designed to be self-sustaining and in suitable locations within the landscape context determined to provide habitat connectivity and/or habitat linkages.

- Establishing scrub-shrub or emergent wetlands designed to be self-sustaining, natural systems within the landscape and climate in which they are located, with little or no ongoing maintenance and/or hydrologic manipulation.
- Do not impact ecologically important uplands, such as mature forest.

4. For Land Preservation with no Restoration/Enhancement/Establishment

Land protection is essential to protecting the functions and values of those aquatic resources that are extremely difficult to restore or replace, and it reduces the threat of future impacts. ARM Funds may, under the circumstances below, be used to establish permanent legal protection of streams, wetlands, surface waters and their upland buffers. *Note: Preservation sites that are comprised of at least 50% aquatic resources relative to uplands will be more competitive. Preservation-only proposals will compete against restoration projects.*

- In all cases “preservation-only” proposals must be free from land-use practices that may affect long-term levels of functions and sustainability.
- Propose protection of resources are under threat of destruction or adverse modifications in accordance with [USACE Regulatory Guidance Letter No. 02-02](#).
- Include a minimum 200’ natural buffer on jurisdictional areas.
- Have the landowner willing to accept the limited use restrictions outlined in ARM’s standard [Conservation Easement Template](#), to ensure long-term sustainability and to comply with 33 CFR 332.

Preservation-only proposals must contain at least one of the following “Difficult-to-Replace” aquatic resources:

- Documented vernal pools and surrounding upland habitat.
- Documented bogs.
- Salt marsh or area for salt marsh migration.
- Sand dunes.
- Habitat for federal Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed or state-listed wildlife species (as determined by NHFG), state-listed plant species or exemplary natural communities (as determined by NH NHB).
- Intact, undisturbed floodplain wetlands adjacent to Tier 3 stream or higher water course and buffers.

Ineligible Project Types

The following proposals are not eligible for funding:

- Proposals to fund only the design phase (*Note: A project’s overall budget may include design costs*).
- Proposals to fund dam acquisition without a proposal to remove the structure.
- Proposals to fund stabilization to protect infrastructure that will impede natural stream migration.
- Proposals to fund restoration that is the result of contemporary land disturbance, such as from logging.
- Proposals to fund crossings that do not meet the NH Stream Crossing Guidelines (2009), Chapter III, Design Guidelines for New Stream Crossings (*Note: ARM will consider projects with design impediments other than cost*).
- Proposals to fund invasive species removal where re-establishment of these species is probable and would require continual maintenance and/or treatment."
- Projects expected to take longer than three years (from permitting through construction).

Please contact the ARM Program for questions regarding eligibility: des.arm@des.nh.gov.

ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES

- Wetland delineation, function/condition assessments, biological surveys, Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, Hydrologic and Hydraulic modelling. *Note, project related assessments/evaluations, design and project scope development costs may be eligible for reimbursement once the grant agreement is in place.*
- Section 106 Consultation.
- Development of preliminary and final design plans.
- Permitting.
- Project management and grant administration.
- Materials, construction management, contracted services, consulting fees, site clearing, excavation, grading, disposal of excavated materials and plantings.
- As-built plans and reporting.
- Annual monitoring.
- Adaptive management measures and financial assurances.
- Legal land protection costs including due diligence and transaction items (environmental surveys, boundary surveys, baseline documentation, appraisals, environmental hazard assessments, title review, closing costs, legal fees and deed registry fees).
- Fees for stewardship to ensure the long-term management and protection of the land.
- For more information on tasks and items that may be eligible and are recommended for inclusion in the project budget please review the ARM Fund Grant Project Budget Template (Appendix B).

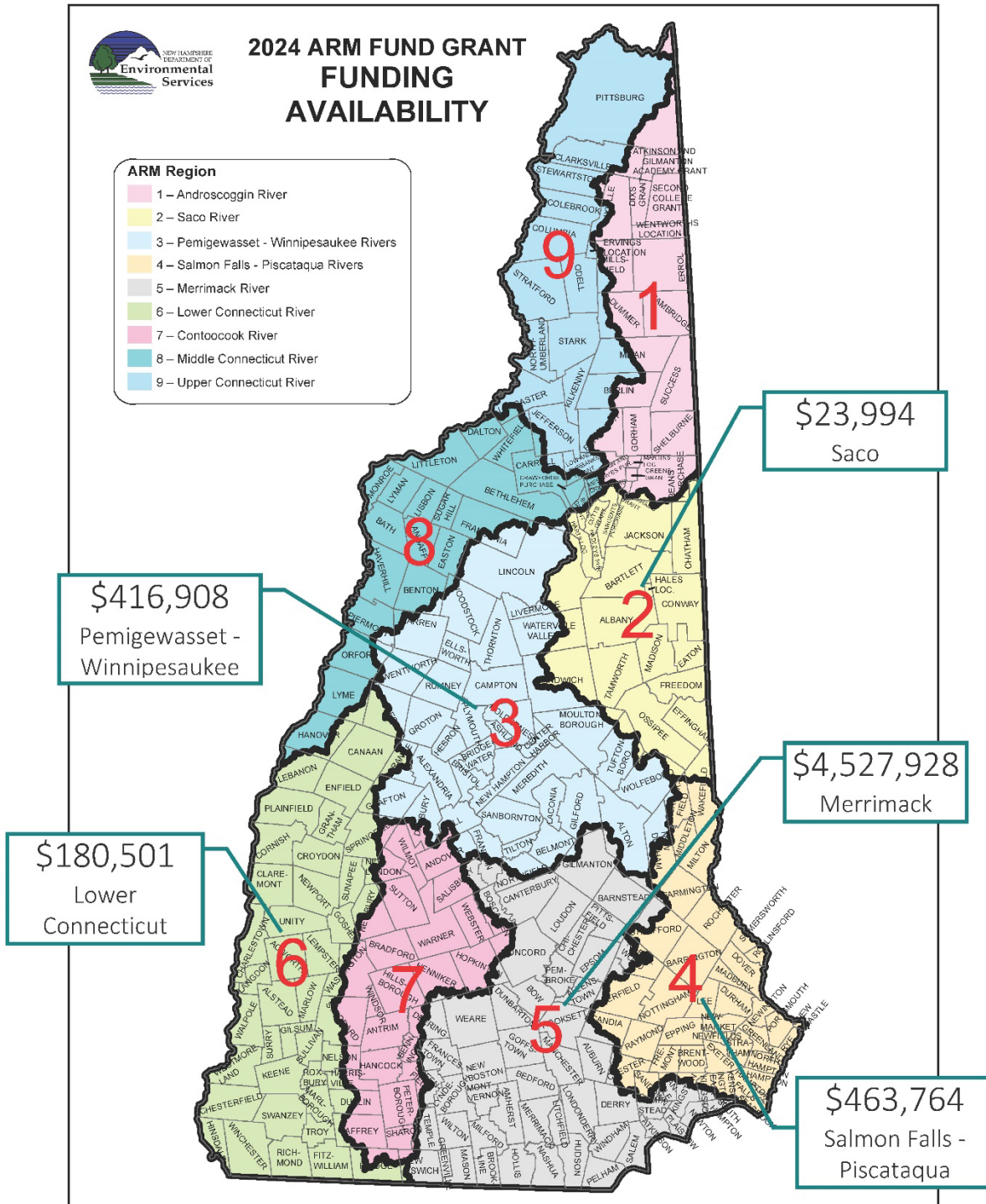
LEDGER

SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND LOSSES

The table below includes a summary of the Service Areas (watersheds) with funding for 2024 proposals. The 2024 ARM Fund In-Lieu Fee Payment Ledger summarizes the compensatory mitigation payments accepted by the ARM Fund as compensation for the unavoidable losses to aquatic resources authorized by state and federal permit decisions.

Service Area	Total Funds Available	Wetland Impacts (Acres)	Stream Impacts (Linear feet)	Aquatic Resource Type	Functions and Values to be Replaced
Lower Connecticut	\$180,501	1.06	0	Non-tidal wetlands, PRA-floodplain wetland adjacent to tier 3	Ecological Integrity, Flood Storage, Groundwater Recharge, Wildlife Habitat, Shoreline Anchoring, Fisheries Habitat, Flood flow alteration and storage
Merrimack	\$4,527,928	14.76	2,517	Non-tidal wetlands, Riverine/streams, Vernal pools, PRA-floodplain wetland adjacent to tier 3, PRA- Protected species habitat, PRA-prime wetlands	Wildlife Habitat, Threatened and Endangered Species Habitat, Flood Storage, Sediment/Toxicant Retention, Flood Flow Alteration, Nutrient Removal, Ecological Integrity, Groundwater Recharge, Nutrient Retention, Production Export, Scenic Quality, Sediment Trapping, Shoreline Anchoring, Uniqueness/Heritage
Pemigewasset-Winnepesaukee	\$416,908	0.84	710	Non-tidal wetlands, Riverine/streams	Sediment/Nutrient Retention, Wildlife Habitat, Ecological Integrity, Water Quality
Saco	\$23,994	0	93	PRA-floodplain wetland adjacent to tier 3	Fish & Shellfish Habitat Flood Flow Alteration Groundwater Recharge Sediment/ Toxicant / Pathogen Retention Sediment/Shoreline Stabilization Visual Quality/Aesthetics Wildlife Habitat
Salmon Falls-Piscataqua	\$463,764	1.869	9	Tidal wetlands (intertidal, subtidal and riverine), non-tidal wetlands, streams, PRA- Tidal Waters; PRA-Tidal Wetlands; PRA-Prime Wetlands, PRA- Species Habitat	Ecological Integrity, Flood Storage, Wildlife Habitat, Fisheries & Shellfish Habitat, T/E Species Habitat, Sediment/Toxicant Retention
Total	5,613,095	18.54	3,329		

AVAILABLE FUNDS BY WATERSHED SERVICE AREAS ACCEPTING PROPOSALS



2024 GRANT ROUND TIMELINE OVERVIEW

<i>Pre-Proposal</i>	March 22, 2024	Virtual office hour for prospective applicants. If you are interested in attending, please register .
	May 31, 2024	Pre-proposal deadline. Pre-proposal forms can be completed electronically or printed and submitted by mail or email. Electronic submittal is encouraged.
	June / July 2024	Review by and feedback from SSC and IRT. Preliminary site visits may be requested upon review of pre-proposals, and if applicable, will be coordinated with applicants. Projects deemed eligible will be provided feedback and invited to submit full applications.
	July 2024	Pre-proposals deemed eligible will be provided to the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources (DHR) for review and comment. Please be advised preliminary consultation with DHR may result in the recommendation for archaeological assessment to comply with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act.
<i>Full Application</i>	September 15, 2024	Full application deadline. This includes all supporting documents. The full proposal form is being updated and will be available soon.
	Fall 2024	The SSC and IRT review applications, coordinate Public Notice and comment period, conduct GIS analysis, conduct site visits and rank the proposals using the evaluation criteria described below.
	November 2024	SSC evaluates and scores the full proposals and recommends funding awards. Depending on competitiveness, the SSC may award partial funding – this may require modification to the project and approval by NHDES, USACE and the grant recipient.
<i>Funding Award</i>	November / December 2024	ARM requests approval of SSC funding recommendations from the NH Wetlands Council and IRT for approval.
	December 2024	The ARM Fund sends funding decision letters to the applicants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Projects awarded funding receive a letter that outlines approval conditions and the necessary documents to secure funding and project approval. ○ Projects not selected receive a letter outlining decision points made by the SSC and IRT.
	2025	Applicants enter into a grant agreement with NHDES. All grants must be approved by G&C; an award is not secured until after the grant agreement has been approved by G&C. Following authorization of agreements by G&C, funds are allocated to project and available for disbursement dependent upon the conditions outlined in the grant agreement.
		Awarded projects must be implemented within three years of the award date.

2024 GRANT ROUND TIMELINE KEY DATES

Grant Application Milestones	Key Dates
Request for Pre-Proposals	February 2024
2024 Grant Round Overview & Office Hour	March 22 nd 2024
Pre-Proposal Deadline	May 31 st 2024
Preliminary Pre-proposal Eligibility Screening with SSC & IRT	~June 7 th – June 12 th 2024
Send to Eligible Pre-Proposals to DHR for Preliminary Review	Week of Jun 17 th 2024
Preliminary Site Visits	~June 17 th – June 28 th 2024
Pre-Proposal Evaluation and SSC & IRT Recommendation	~June 28 th - July 10 th 2024
SSC & IRT Recommendations Provided to Applicants	~Week of July 15 th 2024
Full Application Deadline	September 15 th 2024
Issue Public Notice	~Week of September 30 th 2024
GIS Review	~ Sept. 30 th – Oct 4 th 2024
Site Visits	~Oct. 8 th – Oct 25 th 2024
Committee Evaluation and Scoring Meeting	~Nov. 4 th – Nov. 15 th 2024
IRT Meeting and Complete Corps Review/Approval	November-December 2024
Wetlands Council Meeting	December 10 th 2024
Announce Awards	December 2024-January 2025

SUMMARY OF SSC EVALUATION CRITERIA

The SSC ranks applications based on [evaluation criteria](#) established in the [NHDES Wetlands Rules, Env-Wt 808.20](#). Projects that fulfill the maximum amount of points will score the highest and will be the most competitive for funding. Below is a summary of the evaluation criteria for consideration.

- ✓ Project involves restoration, enhancement and/or protection of high-value wetlands and streams and will replace or sustain the functions and values lost in the watershed from the permitted impacts that paid into the ARM Fund.
- ✓ Lies within a source water, wellhead, groundwater protection, or high-yield aquifer area (>1,000 acre/ft/day).
- ✓ Benefits an [exemplary natural community, threatened or endangered species](#).
- ✓ Area is ranked as statewide (Tier 1) or regional biological significance (Tier 2) by the NHFG Wildlife Action Plan.
- ✓ The project will contribute to landscape connectivity of conserved lands.
- ✓ Is in the same town or HUC 12 watershed where permitted impacts occurred that generated the funds.
- ✓ Has support from the host-municipality and project partners, and there is $\geq 30\%$ funding match.
- ✓ Area has been identified as a conservation priority in a local, regional, statewide or federal conservation plan.

APPENDIX A:

ARM FUND GRANT APPLICATION EVALUATION CRITERIA

Applications are scored by the ARM Site Selection Committee using a point system established in Env-Wt 808.20, and the maximum amount of points for any project is 100. The maximum amount of points allocated for each category are listed below.

Project Categories

L = Land preservation by acquisition and/or legal protection

W = Wetland restoration, enhancement or creation

S = Stream restoration without land acquisition

C = Stream crossings or dams without land acquisition

I = Invasive species management

1. Restoration and/or Enhancement of Aquatic Resources

Maximum 27 point possible— Check all that apply

If a project contains both wetland and stream restoration/enhancement activities, then the Site Selection Committee will allocate points under question 1 based upon the greatest improvement to aquatic resource functions.

1A. Wetlands

Project restores, enhances or replaces wetland types (NWI) and/or wetland functions & values that were lost in the HUC 8 watershed. In general, funds shall go towards projects or a suite of projects that provide the greatest potential to restore, enhance or replace ecological integrity, water quality and wildlife habitat functions and values lost by the impacts in the HUC 8 watershed as documented in the program ledger, and/or the Compensation Planning Framework for the watershed.

Ecological Integrity: W, C, I

a. _____ (up to 9 points) In general, projects will result in an increase in ecological/hydrologic integrity through a specific activity. The difference in value is based on anticipated change in value or score based on a pre-treatment assessment of the site. If more than one wetland is being affected, then the score shall be the difference in the aggregate of all Ecological or Hydrologic Integrity scores for all wetlands being treated. Greatest amount of points go to a project that results in a significant increase. No points would be awarded if there is no appreciable difference in Ecological or Hydrologic Integrity that will result from the proposed project.

Water Quality: W, C, I

b. _____ (up to 9 points) In general, projects will result in an increase in water quality functions through a specific activity. The difference in value is the anticipated change in value or score based on a pre-treatment assessment of the site. If more than one wetland is being affected, then the score shall be the difference in the aggregate of all Water Quality related functional scores for all wetlands being treated. Greatest amount of points go to a project that will result in an increase in water quality functions through one or more of the following activities: reducing/treating stormwater inputs, restoring hydrology, increasing recharge, stabilizing soils, installing filter strips, increasing flood storage, enhancing sediment trapping or increasing nutrient uptake or transformation that results in a significant increase. No points would be awarded where there is no appreciable difference in water quality will result from the proposed project.

Wildlife Habitat: W, C, I

c. _____ (up to 9 points) In general, projects will result in an increase in wildlife habitat functions through a specific activity. The difference in value is based on anticipated change in value or score based on a pre-treatment assessment of the site. If more than one wetland is being affected, then the score shall be the difference in the aggregate of all wildlife-related functional scores for all wetlands being treated. Greatest amount of points will result in an increase in wildlife habitat function(s) by one or more of the following activities: replanting native species, increasing production export, restoring buffer area integrity, restoring hydrology for AOP, improving habitat structure, re-introducing native species and their habitat or eliminating or controlling invasive species that results in a significant increase. No points would be awarded if there is no appreciable difference in wildlife function(s) will result from the proposed project.

1.B. Streams

Aquatic Organism Passage and Geomorphic Compatibility: S, C

a. _____ (up to 6 points) In general, upgrading road crossings and removing dams without land acquisition (C) projects improve aquatic organism passage and geomorphic compatibility of the stream. The project needs to identify the deficiencies of the crossing(s) proposed to be replaced and provide the scores for Aquatic Organism Passage (AOP) and Geomorphic Compatibility according to the New Hampshire Stream Crossing Initiative scoring scheme. The deficient crossing documentation should provide information that notes its priority for replacement based on local or state planning if available. This question scores the stream restoration or improvement only; if land protection is offered, those points would be gained in Part 4. Tidal crossings will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Greatest amount of points will go to a project that will replace (or remove) a structure that indicates no AOP for all aquatic organisms (including adult salmonids); or is ranked as fully incompatible or mostly incompatible according to geomorphic compatibility score. Lower amount of points consider scores based on AOP and geomorphic compatibility scores with the least amount of points going to a project that will replace (or remove) a structure that has a score that indicates full AOP; or is ranked as fully compatible according to geomorphic compatibility score; OR project does not include a road crossing replacement or removal component.

Stream Connectivity Potential and Habitat Enhancement: S, C, I

b. _____ (up to 6 points) Project will reconnect fragmented instream habitat and significantly **increase the amount of upstream aquatic resources** accessible to anadromous, diadromous or resident fish species and **re-establish a connection** between upstream and downstream habitat for fish, freshwater turtles, amphibians, mussels or aquatic plants. In addition, the project will restore access to or **enhance** stream reaches determined as “high quality habitat” or having a “high restoration” potential. Greatest amount of points would go to a project that reconnects or enhances a **significant** length of stream miles within the watershed (HUC 12) identified as having “high quality” habitat or “high restoration potential” and no points would go to a project that does not improve the connection between upstream and downstream areas or enhance in-stream habitat.

Drainage Area: S, C, I

c. _____ (up to 3 points) Project will contribute to stream passage or enhance habitat that will potentially affect a broader area of the HUC 8 watershed or service area. The larger the watershed area above the activity, the more likely the project will improve the aquatic organism passage and/or habitat at a broader scale. Note that the watershed area should be calculated from the stream crossing location or the lowest point of the enhancement/restoration activity in the Project Area. More points go to tier 3 crossing and the least amount of points go to enhancement of ephemeral stream habitat.

Water Quality: W, C, I

d. _____ (up to 6 points) Project will implement a best management practice (i.e. buffer creation/enhancement or storm water treatment) which will result in an increase in water quality. If more than one best management practice is proposed, the improvement with the greatest treatment will be considered for scoring. For a buffer improvement to receive full points, the buffer improvement must pertain to both sides of the stream. Points will also be distributed based on the amount of water quality improvement relative to the receiving stream reach and identified impairments to the stream. Greatest points will go to a project that results in a buffer enhancement/creation with a width greater than 100 ft., or stormwater treatment prior to discharge to a stream or river with a 75% or greater pollutant load reduction. No points will go to a project that does not provide water quality improvements.

Hydraulic Vulnerability: S, C

e. _____ (up to 6 points) The project will improve a stream reach, or remove a crossing that overtops, which degrades water quality and instream aquatic habitat by increasing sediment loads into the river, eroding stream banks, and are susceptible to washouts of road fill material. Project will replace or remove a stream crossing or enhance stream/riparian areas that are known to experience flooding and have been identified as a past or potential flood issue or is predicted to overtop/fail during specified flood intervals based on a hydraulic capacity model. Greatest amount of points will be awarded to a project that will improve stream passage and hydraulic capacity of a stream crossing that lies within a flood-prone area that is frequently flooded; OR that is predicted to frequently fail/overtop by a hydraulic model (generally a 2 - 25 year or greater storm event). No points will be awarded to a stream passage improvement project that lies in an area that is not considered prone to floods AND **passes** a two-year and greater flood by a hydraulic model.

2. Overall Environmental Significance

Maximum 27 Points Possible – Check All that Apply

Drinking Water Benefits: L, W, S

a. _____ (up to 9 points) Project is located within an area evaluated for drinking water supply potential such as a source water protection area or wellhead protection area, is in an area that overlays a high-yield stratified drift aquifer, or is located within groundwater protection areas or water supply intake protection areas. This question simply evaluates whether a project location overlaps with wellhead protection areas, GA 1 or GA2 areas, or is located within a lower yield stratified drift aquifer (<1,000 acre ft/day).

Wildlife Habitat: L, W, S, C, I

- b. ____ (up to 9 points) Project will benefit endangered, threatened or special concern species and/or exemplary natural communities documented to occur on the property. Greatest points will go to a project that will help protect a known high quality/significant endangered wildlife/plant population (Rank = B or better) or Exemplary Natural Community and no points will be awarded to a project that has no endangered, threatened, special concern species (wildlife or plants), or exemplary natural community known or potential based on application, NHB DataCheck, and committee knowledge.
- c. ____ (up to 9 points) Project is located in or in close proximity to NH WAP highest quality wildlife habitat. Greatest amount of points are awarded if a project is in a Tier 1 (State Ranked) area. Point range can vary for how significant the project is for the WAP area. No points will be awarded if the project is not in or near (within 250 m) or contributes to a Tier 1 (Highest Ranked State), 2 (Highest Ranked Biological Region) or 3 (Supporting Landscape) area.

3. Proximity to Conserved Lands and Landscape Connectivity

Maximum 19 Points Possible – Check All that Apply

Benefits to Nearby Conservation Land: L, W, S, C, I

- a. ____ (up to 4 points) Project is adjacent to lands protected in perpetuity. This question does not require that project PROTECT land. Greatest points will be awarded to a project if it is adjacent to protected land. No points are awarded if the project is not adjacent to protected lands.

Landscape Connections L, W, S, C, I

- b. ____ (up to 4 points) Project provides or contributes to a connection between lands that are currently unconnected, and which are protected in perpetuity. For the purposes of this question and aquatic systems projects (not riparian buffers), public waters (major rivers, lakes/ponds > 10 acres) are considered protected. This question does not necessarily require that project protect land. Greatest points are awarded if the proposal protects land & creates a new connection between two separate protected lands (L projects only). No points are awarded if there is no contribution to a connection of protected lands.
- c. ____ (up to 4 points) Project contributes to linkages or over-land connections among and between one or more aquatic resource areas. This question involves linkages to aquatic resources over land (terrestrial). Greatest points are awarded if the site includes wet-dry-wet “land” connection protection. “Wet” can include vernal pools and surface water (flowing or ponded). No points are awarded if no connection.
- d. ____ (up to 4 points) Project lies within a large unfragmented block of land, relative to the HUC 10 watershed. For this question, use unfragmented lands layer from the WAP, unless specifically derived by the applicant for the purposes of answering this question. Greatest points are awarded to projects that lie within one of top five unfragmented blocks. No points are awarded if the project is not within, near, or contributes to one of the five large unfragmented blocks.

Distance to Impact Location

- e. ____ (up to 3 points) Project is located within the same sub-watershed (HUC 10) as the impact area(s) that generated the funds. Greatest points awarded if in the same watershed, any part or amount. No points awarded if not in the same watershed.

4. Overall Mitigation Potential

Maximum 19 Points Possible – Check All that Apply.)

Protection of Valuable Aquatic Resources and Upland Buffers: L only

- a. _____ (up to 6 points) Project will contribute to the protection of most or all of an aquatic resource. ‘Aquatic resource’ includes any surface waters and/or wetlands including vernal pools. This question requires that the project PROTECT land legally and permanently. Greatest points awarded to a project that protects wetland acreage > 100 acres; or 6 or more documented vernal pools and their critical terrestrial habitat will be mostly to fully legally protected following the completion of project. No points are awarded to a project where protection is non-permanent or unknown.
- b. _____ (up to 10 points) Project will protect an upland buffer that protects an aquatic resource. ‘Aquatic resource’ includes any surface waters and/or wetland type including vernal pools. Greatest points are awarded to a project where an aquatic resource identified as a regionally or locally important, high value or prime wetland or surface water and an upland buffer of $\geq 200'$ will be fully legally protected following the completion of the project. Full or nearly full points can be awarded if a portion of the aquatic resource is already protected, and the proposed project completes protection. No points are awarded if the project has no permanent protection to the aquatic resource buffer.
- c. _____ (up to 3 points) Project will protect most or all of the watershed of the aquatic resource(s) within the project area. This question pertains to the watershed of the aquatic resource within the HUC 12 watershed(s) where the resource occurs. The watershed of a vernal pool may be very small, and the entire watershed can be easily protected. Large rivers are unlikely to meet these criteria unless they are headwater areas.

5. Cost-Effectiveness and Partnerships: L, W, S, C, I

Maximum 8 Points Possible – Check All that Apply

a. _____ (up to 3 points) Project will provide a cash and/or in-kind donation match of at least 30%.

3 points - \geq 30% cash/in-kind match provided

2 points - \geq 20% cash/in-kind match provided

1 point - \geq 10% cash/in-kind match provided

0 points - < 10% of cash/in-kind match provided.

b. _____ (up to 3 points) Project area is identified in a federal or state environmental priority plan other than the WAP. Plans under this question must include a spatial component. In other words, project area needs to be mapped as a priority area. It is not enough that an action is listed in a plan without a spatial reference. Examples of plans with a spatial component include: NH Coastal Plan, Quabbin to Cardigan, Merrimack River watershed plan, Blanding's turtle conservation plan for northeast, etc. A list is available from the mitigation program. Greatest points awarded to project noted in a plan, no points awarded if not included in a recognized plan.

c. _____ (2) Project is supported by the host municipality.

2 points – yes, letter submitted by town

0 points — no letter submitted

Total Score _____ out of 100 points

APPENDIX B: ARM FUND GRANT BUDGET TEMPLATE

Budget category	ARM Funds Requested	Total Cost	Notes/Matching Funds/Sources
Engineering design & permitting			
Section 106 Consultation & Environmental Review			
Wetland Delineation and Functional Assessment/Stream Survey			
Materials			
Construction contract services			
Construction oversight and monitoring			
Project management			
Performance monitoring (5-year minimum)			
Financial assurance for maintenance			
Adaptive management (<i>recommend at least 20% of total project cost</i>)			
Land or easement Purchase			
Appraisal			
Property survey			
Title research, opinion and insurance			
Legal services and closing			
Real estate transfer tax			
Baseline documentation Report			
Environmental Assessment/Phase I - Hazardous Waste			
Project Management/Land Agent Cost			
Stewardship fund and monitoring			
Other (add in items and describe)			
TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES:			

APPENDIX C: 2024 ARM Fund Grant Reference Checklist of Required Documentation for ARM Funded Projects

This reference checklist provides an overview of ARM Fund requirements. The application forms provide the detailed requirements including definitions, templates and links.			
● required / ○ recommended	Pre-Proposal	Full Proposal	Awarded Projects
General			
Application Form	●	●	
Project Narratives	●	●	
Wetland Delineation Map	○	●	
Table of Aquatic Resources		●	
Classifications of Aquatic Resources	○	●	
Wetland Functional Assessment (Env-Wt 808.04(d))	○	●	
Stream Assessment [project-specific] (SVAP v2)		●	●
Stream Geomorphic Assessment [project-specific]		●	●
Budget	●	●	
Aquatic Resource Maps (may use National Wetlands Inventory Plus layer) ARM Mapper and UNH GRANIT View	○	●	
Landscape Connectivity Map (ARM Mapper and UNH GRANIT View)	●	●	
Wildlife Action Plan Tiers Map (ARM Mapper and UNH GRANIT View)	●	●	
GIS Shapefile (NAD 83) [property boundary and aquatic resources]		●	
Acknowledgement of Landowner Consent	●	●	
Letters of Support (i.e. local Conservation Commission)		●	
Site Photos	○	●	
Design Plans [Project specific but typically include engineering, stabilization and planting plans.]	○	●	
Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act	○	●	
Restoration/Enhancement/Creation			
NHDES & USACE Permitting			●
Post-Construction Delineation [project specific]			●
Post-Construction Function/Condition Assessment [project specific]			●
As-built plans, and report			●
5 years Performance Monitoring and Reporting to ARM [project specific]			●
Adaptive Management Plan and Implementation [in coordination with ARM]			●
Land Protection either alone or as part of Restoration Project			
GIS shapefile (NAD 83) [easement boundary and aquatic resources]	○	●	
Baseline Documentation Report (BDR)		●	●
Easement Holder Letter	● (interest)	● (commitment)	
Conservation Goals	●	●	
Draft Deed		●	
Property Survey	○	○	●
Draft Legal Description		●	
Signed Recorded Deed			●
Stewardship Plan		○	●
Boundary Monumentation			●
Annual Monitoring and Reporting to ARM			●