

Program Guidelines



ELGIN CLEAN WATER PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Elgin Clean Water Program (ECWP) are as follows:

- Engage and assist watershed residents in discussions and actions pertaining to stewardship and conservation.
- Enhance public awareness of watershed/County environmental issues by providing stewardship information and education to watershed residents.
- Implement and aid in projects that improve or maintain water quality and quantity, as well as terrestrial and aquatic habitat and related resources.
- Provide financial assistance to assist watershed residents in implementing stewardship projects.
- Address recommendations from monitoring and evaluation programs regarding stewardship projects to evaluate success and progress.

The target of the ECWP is to achieve an improvement or maintenance of water quality and quantity, and an increase or maintenance of aquatic and terrestrial habitat and resource quality and quantity in the County of Elgin.

Along with the benefits to the ecological systems of the watershed there will be substantial socio-economic benefits. Some of these include:

- Increases in property, ecological and monetary value (i.e., natural services and resources).
- Increased community pride and cooperation through stewardship programs and projects.
- Increased tourism as a result of a healthier, more “attractive” County.
- Enhanced assimilative capacity of water systems (greater buffering capacity to facilitate future ecologically stable population growth within the County).
- Protection of groundwater and surface water resources.
- Improved recreational opportunities within the County (i.e., swimming, nature appreciation, hiking, canoeing, angling, and hunting).
- Increased educational opportunities within the County.

PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

The ECWP has been developed to be implemented within the County of Elgin and programs and initiatives will be tailored to the nature and issues of the local area.

Funding from other sources may be combined with the ECWP, but under no circumstances can total combined cost share exceed 100 percent of project establishment costs.

Eligible Projects and Project Categories

Although there are funding eligibility categories (Table 1), there will be flexibility in considering applications that address enhancing or protecting watershed health.

Table 1: Eligible Project Categories

Project Categories	Example Project Types
Well Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decommissioning of unused wells • Well upgrades, improvements
Erosion Control	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cropland erosion control structures • Streambank erosion/stabilization structures
Clean Water Diversion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eavestroughs • Berms and ditches to redirect runoff
Wetland and Riparian Habitat Enhancement/Restoration/Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stream/riparian/wetland restoration projects
Livestock Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Watercourse fencing • Alternative watering systems
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other worthwhile project brought forward by the applicant that meets the ECWP objectives

Ineligible Projects

The following projects are ineligible for funding:

- Exotic or invasive plant species plantings.
- Private new well construction, well pumps/plumbing or water purification/treatment systems.
- Proposed work to wells not carried out by a licensed well contractor (as per *O. Reg. 903/90* amended to *O. Reg. 128/03*).
- Lake Erie shoreline erosion control.
- Irrigation pond construction and stocking of ponds.
- Stocking of property with game.
- Field tile drainage for cropping purposes.
- Household green energy projects.
- Septic pump outs and septic system works associated with additional living spaces in a dwelling.

Eligible Expenses

Upon completion of approved projects, applicants will be eligible for financial assistance. Eligible project costs are specific to each category but at minimum may include the following:

- Construction materials
- Licensed contractor and/or licensed technician fees
- Design fees
- Applicant labour costs including the applicant’s labour (\$20/hour) and machine cost (\$50/hour) to a maximum of 25% of the total value of those services.

Please note that taxes are not eligible expenses.

General Program Guidelines

- Grants are limited to properties in the County of Elgin.
- Any applicant who proceeds with a project before it has been accepted by the Review Committee has no assurance that the financial assistance will be provided.
- An applicant must complete a project within the allotted granting period. If the project cannot be completed within the specified timeframe, the grant may not be available. However, the applicant may appeal to the Review Committee for an extension.

- The Review Committee will review applications allocate funding to projects with the greatest potential to improve local water quality and habitat.
- The ECWP will favour projects that are cost effective, innovative, and include participation of watershed residents.
- Applicants may submit more than one application for consideration. However, first time applicants will be given higher priority than returning applicants.
- Projects must be completed to the satisfaction of Conservation Authority staff within a defined, agreed upon time period.

Cost Share Amounts and Caps

Table 2 indicates the cost-share proportion and the grant cap applicants can receive upon completion of the approved project.

Approved projects will receive 50% cost-share funding up to the grant cap for each project category. The participating landowner is responsible for the remaining 50% costs. Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant’s business are eligible as matching funding but to a maximum of 25% of the total value of those services.

Table 2: Project Cost-Share Proportions and Grant Caps

Project Categories	Cost-Share Proportion	Grant Cap
Well Management	50%	\$500
Erosion Control	50%	\$4,000
Clean Water Diversion	50%	\$3,000
Habitat Enhancement/Restoration/Protection	50%	\$3,000
Livestock Management	50%	\$3,000
Other	50%	\$3,000

Program Process

1. An interested landowner contacts their local Conservation Authority about a stewardship project on their property to determine if the project meets eligibility requirements.
2. The Applicant obtains a quote(s) for proposed works.
3. An on-site consultation with CA staff is arranged to discuss the project.
4. If necessary, the applicant approaches the deeded landowner for approval for a stewardship project on the specific property and the deeded landowner must agree to be involved in the application process before a site visit is scheduled.
5. The CA staff member will provide the landowner with an application form to describe the proposed project including the amount of financial assistance they are seeking.
6. The Applicant will submit their application to their CA staff.
7. Applications will be presented anonymously by CA staff to the Review Committee for review and decision making.
8. Subject to approval of the application and obtaining any necessary permits, projects may proceed after the applicant signs the funding application and agreement. Projects consisting of in-stream works must be done under the requirements of applicable permits.
9. Applicant to complete the project, pay all associated invoices, arrange to have a final inspection with CA staff.
10. CA staff will submit completed paperwork to the Elgin Clean Water Coordinator (KCCA) for the payment of cost-share funds to the Applicant.

Elgin Clean Water Program Review Committee

The Review Committee will meet to review funding applications. Meetings will be held at the call of the ECWP Coordinator.

The Review Committee will be made up of a representative from the County of Elgin, Elgin Federation of Agriculture, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

The Elgin Clean Water Program Coordinator will also attend meetings and will be responsible for coordinating the meetings (i.e., forming agenda and preparing minutes). CA staff will attend the Review Committee meetings to present applications from their watershed.

The role of the Review Committee is:

- Review proposed projects based upon:
 - Their interpretation of the program guidelines.
 - Input and recommendations from CA staff.
 - The technical merits and priority of the project.
 - The cost effectiveness of the project.
 - The ability of the project to meet the goals and objectives of the program.
 - The project's potential to increase public awareness and participation in conservation efforts.
- Deny, defer or recommend approval of worthy projects for funding.
- Provide direction to the Elgin Clean Water Program Coordinator on promotion and priorities of the program.
- Declare any conflicts of interest.

In ruling on specific projects, a minimum of three Review Committee members must be present in order for a resolution to be binding. The decision to approve a project for funding, deny funding, or defer review, will be based on majority vote. The Chair will break any tie votes.

The Review Committee has the authority to place conditions for financial assistance or to specify a lower or higher grant rate depending on the nature of the project. This may be done under special circumstances, for example in the case of a low priority project or near the end of the year when the majority of available funds have been allocated. As well, the Review Committee could limit the number of projects approved per category in any given year.

In determining project eligibility for financial assistance under cost sharing arrangements, the Review Committee, with assistance from CA staff, will assess the degree to which the project meets the needs of improving watershed health. The following criteria can be utilized as an aid in determining whether projects should be funded.

Project reduces or protects surface water or groundwater from the risk of loadings of:

- Sediment;
- Bacteria and nutrients; and
- And other deleterious substances.

Project protects groundwater through:

- Protecting areas of groundwater recharge (i.e., wetlands or sandy areas);

- Promoting water conservation or wise use; and
- Protecting private wells and areas around wells, recharge areas or aquifers.

Project provides, protects or enhances aquatic habitats such as:

- Cover;
- Breeding or spawning areas;
- Nursery areas;
- Migratory pathways; and
- Other habitat requirements.

Project provides, protects or enhances terrestrial habitats by:

- Providing species specific habitat that is currently limiting;
- Enhancing and widening corridors; and
- Other habitat requirements.

Project reduces erosion related to:

- Streambank and riparian areas;
- Crop fields;
- Upland wind or water erosion; and
- Other site specific erosion problems.

Project provides other benefits:

- Addresses specific watershed health issues in a cost effective manner;
- Improves awareness of watershed health issues;
- Is innovative, experimental or demonstrative in nature; and
- Enlists participation from many partners or promotes public conservation education.

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