



H.R. 5216

CONNECTICUT RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP ACT



COLUMBIA | SIPA

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DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

DEFINITIONS:

Watershed: geographic area of land where all the water that falls as rain, snow, or flows across the surface drains into a common outlet, such as a river, lake, or ocean.

Restoration and Conservation: The process of repairing and returning degraded ecosystems to their original condition or functionality, and the protection and sustainable management of natural resources.

Land Use Change: The transformation or modification of how humans utilize land, such as converting forests to agriculture, wetlands to urban areas, or rural lands to industrial zones.

Environmental Justice Communities: groups of people or areas that experience a disproportionate share of environmental burdens and often lack equitable access to environmental benefits.

Biodiversity: is the variety of life on Earth, including the diversity of species, ecosystems, and genetic variations within species.

ACRONYMS:

USFWS: United States Fish and Wildlife Service

NFWF: National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

DOI: Department of Interior

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

RRC: River Revive Coalition

CT River: Connecticut River

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

NOAA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

USGS: United States Geological Survey

EJ: Environmental Justice

CRW: Connecticut River Watershed

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Act, H.R. 5216, aims to tackle the significant long-term environmental degradation in the Connecticut River Watershed area. The Act will establish both a Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Program and a Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Grant Program, which will be led by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. These initiatives will coordinate and fund projects focused on implementation, capacity building, planning, and research, all aimed at conserving and restoring the watershed.

This Partnership Program is responsible for identifying key impact areas, consulting with leaders in the field, and implementing new and existing plans for the watershed. The CT River Partnership Grant Program, in collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), will be administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). This organization will aggregate and evaluate grant applications, as well as manage the program's budget and funding.

In this report, we will explore the root causes of degradation facing the Connecticut River Watershed, considering both time and magnitude. We will introduce H.R. 5216, detailing its goals and requirements. Additionally, we will outline the design of the grant program and provide an example of how one could navigate the process. A case study will illustrate the effectiveness of this type of legislation. Lastly, we will present a vision for the future of this program and discuss how it can be sustained and expanded.



Old Saybrook post living shoreline restoration

THE WATERSHED



The Vernon Dam in New Hampshire

The watershed is facing numerous challenges, including climate change, pollution, flooding, and disruption of ecosystems, all of which are largely caused by human activities.

THE CONTEXT

A BRIEF STORY OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER

The history of the Connecticut River dates to the earliest Native American inhabitants, who named the river “Quinnetukut,” meaning “long tidal river.” The name reflects the ocean’s influence on water levels, which extends up to 60 miles upriver from the Long Island Sound.¹ During this time, native inhabitants lived in harmony with nature, relying on the river’s abundant resources for sustenance in their daily lives.

The Connecticut River was among the first to be settled by European immigrants, who capitalized on its connectivity as it flowed through what are now the states of Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, New Hampshire, and Connecticut. This accessibility contributed to a post-settlement economic boom, attracting mills during the Industrial Revolution and supporting the development of several thriving towns across New England.²

However, the river’s development came at a significant environmental cost. As early as the 1630s, dams were constructed for flood control, water supply, power generation, and recreation.³ While beneficial for humans, these dams disrupted habitats for key migratory fish species like Atlantic salmon, which hold cultural and economic importance.⁴ In addition to these physical barriers, pollution from agriculture, urban runoff, and industrial activities has degraded water quality, leading to nutrient overload, habitat destruction, and harmful algal blooms. These combined factors have resulted in long-term ecological damage that continues to threaten the river’s health and the diverse species that rely on its ecosystem.



Connecticut River surrounded by farms

THE PROBLEM



Stormwater runoff and the effects of urbanization on rivers

LAND USE CHANGE

Urban development reduces infiltration through soil compaction and impervious surfaces, causing higher peak flows and increased flooding.⁵ Runoff from snowmelt and rain carries pollutants like oil, metals, and pesticides into the river, harming wildlife and drinking water.⁶ Combined sewer systems often overflow during heavy rain, discharging untreated sewage and introducing harmful bacteria like fecal coliforms, which threaten human health through recreational contact or consumption of contaminated fish and shellfish.⁷

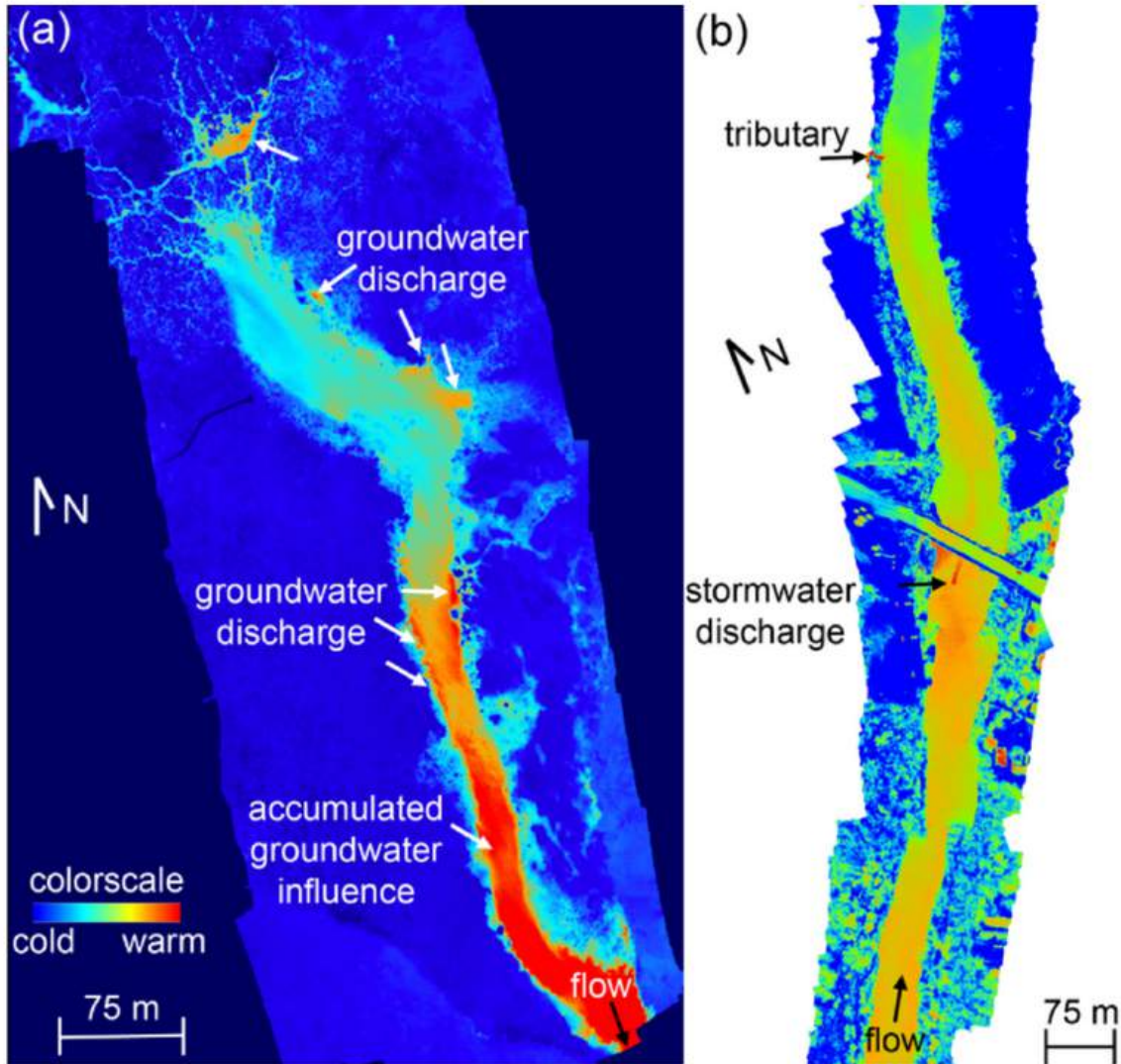
INDUSTRIAL WASTE

For decades, untreated waste from metallurgy, textile, and paperboard factories has polluted the river with heavy metals, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and other toxins. Heavy metals like chromium, copper, lead, and mercury bioaccumulate in the food chain, threatening wildlife and humans.⁸ Despite being banned, PCBs persist in sediments, disrupting ecosystems, causing mutations, and reducing fish populations.

AGRICULTURAL RUNOFF

Fertilizer runoff, rich in nitrogen and phosphorus, fuels algal blooms that deplete oxygen, creating hypoxic conditions harmful to aquatic life. Pesticides used for pest control disrupt ecosystems by promoting resistant species and contaminate groundwater, posing health risks to humans.⁹ These pollutants, transported by rainfall and flooding, further degrade the river's health.

FARMINGTON RIVER: THE LARGEST TRIBUTARY OF THE CONNECTICUT RIVER



Thermal infrared images from the Farmington River

Drone-based thermal infrared images from the Farmington River in Connecticut help visualize the flow of groundwater and stormwater. These images use color to show temperature differences: warmer areas (in red and yellow) represent regions where groundwater is discharging into the river, while cooler areas (in blue and green) indicate inflows from colder tributaries or stormwater. This thermal imagery gives a clear picture of how water moves through the landscape, highlighting where groundwater and surface water interact.



THE BILL

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP ACT

H.R. 5216, the Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Act, was introduced by Representative James McGovern of Massachusetts' 2nd Congressional District, with eight cosponsors from the affected states.¹¹ The Connecticut River Watershed spans Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. This legislation aims to establish a nonregulatory partnership program within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to coordinate restoration and protection efforts across the watershed. It also proposes a grant program to support these activities, engaging federal, state, local, tribal, and private entities in conservation, restoration, education, and recreation initiatives.



The Connecticut River by Lloyd Kass

BILL REQUIREMENTS

BRINGING TOGETHER THE WATERSHED STAKEHOLDERS



The Connecticut River Watershed

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Secretary of the Interior will establish a voluntary partnership program managed by the USFWS. This program will create a channel of communication for the five states within the watershed, federal agencies, NGOs, tribal governments, universities, research institutions, and environmental justice communities.

ESTABLISH GRANT PROGRAM

The USFWS will establish an agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to manage the Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Grant Program. This program will offer competitive matching grants to eligible entities to support its objectives. The NFWF will create criteria to ensure that funds are distributed equitably. Funding will cover up to 75% of the total project costs, except in cases involving environmental justice, where funding will be increased to a maximum of 90% of total project costs.

BILL REQUIREMENTS CONTINUED



March Sampling USGS
Electrofishing survey USFWS

IDENTIFY PROJECTS

The USFWS will identify projects that align with the bill's objectives, which include coordinating restoration and conservation programs throughout the watershed and implementing nature-based solutions to improve resilience in communities and natural habitats. The goals also emphasize engaging the public, particularly environmental justice communities and tribal nations, while fostering community involvement and education in environmental stewardship. Additionally, the bill seeks to improve access to outdoor activities like hunting, hiking, and fishing, increase scientific capacity for research and protection efforts, and provide technical assistance where needed.

CONSULT WITH EXPERTS

The Partnership Program will consult with experts and applicable non profit entities including the Silvio O'Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, its Research facility, the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, the Connecticut River Conservancy, the Connecticut River Migratory Fish Restoration Cooperative, the EPA, NOAA, and USGS.

REPORT

Annually, the Partnership Program will submit a report on the implementation status of the Act. This report will cover the overall status of the Partnership Program, the Grant Program, and include detailed information about each project that received funding through this legislation.

IMPACT AREAS

ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION

The primary goal of H.R. 5216 is to restore and protect the Connecticut River Watershed, which has been significantly impacted by land-use changes, urbanization, and climate change. Addressing these challenges requires the implementation of targeted environmental solutions. Key practices include riparian buffer restoration, floodplain restoration, and the removal of invasive species, all of which are essential for revitalizing the watershed's health and resilience.



Invasive phragmites removal

Wetland site assessment

Climate Justice Coalition

SOCIAL

H.R. 5216 emphasizes community engagement by collaborating with environmental justice (EJ) communities and tribal nations to ensure inclusive participation in watershed restoration. The bill promotes educational initiatives and community events to raise awareness, encourage hands-on involvement, and empower local stakeholders. This approach fosters equitable solutions that benefit both the environment and the people who depend on it.

CAPACITY AND R&D

Restoration and conservation thrive on innovation, dedication, and the scientific process. A key impact of H.R. 5216 is its focus on fostering innovation in watershed restoration practices while providing technical assistance to projects lacking the necessary resources. This approach ensures that even under-resourced initiatives can contribute effectively to the protection and revitalization of the Connecticut River Watershed.

KEY PARTNERSHIPS

STATES

- Connecticut
- Maine
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Vermont

FEDERAL AGENCIES

- EPA
- NOAA
- USGS
- United States Parks Service
- Silvio O'Conte Wildlife Refuge
- Army Corps of Engineers

NGO

- Connecticut River Joint Commission
- Connecticut River Conservancy
- The Connecticut River Salmon Association
- Vermont Environmental Justice Network, Friends of Conte
- Trout Unlimited

ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

- University of Massachusetts
- Dartmouth College
- University of Connecticut
- Yale University



Friends of O. Conte Refuge
the Connecticut River Salmon Association
Connecticut River Joint Commission





Cutting for strategic root placement restoration CRC

PROGRAM DESIGN

The grant program is designed both to assist organizations with their conservation work and to keep them accountable to their stated deadlines. The key components of this outline focus on who the applicant is, which fund they'll apply for, evaluation of their project, budgeting their project, and then setting mutually agreed upon and realistic goals.

In order to better illustrate this process, we've constructed a fictional organization, the River Revive Coalition, and will take it through each step of the program.

A CONCEPTUAL DEMONSTRATION OF THE GRANT PROGRAM: RIVERREVIVE COALITION

STAFFING

ALLOCATION

EVALUATION

BUDGET

MEASURING SUCCESS



A FICTIONAL NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

The **River Revive Coalition (RRC)** is a fictional non-profit we developed to illustrate the process of applying for and securing grant funding through this legislation. By following RRC's journey, we demonstrate the steps involved—from identifying eligible funding opportunities, preparing a detailed proposal, and meeting application requirements to receiving the award and implementing the wetland restoration project in North Hadley, MA. This case study serves as a practical guide for other organizations aiming to navigate the grant application process effectively.

STAFFING PLAN

IMPLEMENTATION TIME LINE IN APPENDIX



RIVER REVIVE COALITION

NFWF, contracted by USFWS, manages the grant program directly, including the funding, administration, and evaluation of proposals. RRC would liaise with program directors or managers within NFWF to clarify grant criteria and ensure compliance during the application process.

RRC will not liaise with the CRW Partnership Advisory Board, as this board's primary role is to coordinate efforts at a strategic, high-level across the Connecticut River Watershed, including setting grant criteria and advising on program priorities.

Since many bills in the past have established partnership and grant programs similar to the one in H.R. 5216, the organizational structure and staffing plan is designed to utilize existing frameworks. By leveraging existing collaboration between the **US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)** and **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF)**, this bill's organizational structure can be flexible and accommodate changes proposed by its stakeholders encompassing the Advisory Board.

USFWS, the main federal agency in charge of this bill, will contract out management of the program to NFWF. NFWF will earmark the congressional funds allocated by the bill to constitute a budget to pay a Program Director, supply grant program administration costs, and provide grant funds for disbursement. Since the watershed is located in the Northeastern US, USFWS Region 5 offices will be involved in the organizational structure.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ORG CHARTS IN APPENDIX



PROGRAM ENTITIES

CRW Partnership Advisory Board: An advisory board consisting of representatives from the five watershed states, non-profits listed in the bill, local governments, tribes, NFWF, and USFWS to establish criteria for giving out grants for the Program.

CRW Grant Program: Advised by the CRW Partnership Advisory Board, and administered by the CRW Grant Review Committee.

CRW Grant Review Committee: An external body of experts on the criteria outlined by the Partnership Advisory Board convened for the purpose of reviewing grant applications.

GRANT ALLOCATIONS

Given the challenges of conservation and restoration work, including their high costs and long timelines, the program will provide a range of grant sizes (10,000 to over \$1M) aiming to accommodate diverse project types and maximize environmental impact. For context, the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program, a similar grant-based initiative managed by the USFWS, allocated \$14.4 million for grants in 2024.¹² If H.R. 5216 receives a similar amount of funding we could expect to disburse these funds across the following categories:



IMPLEMENTATION

Ready-to-go conservation & restoration projects

- Invasive Species Removal
- Floodplain Restoration
- Riparian Buffer Restoration



CAPACITY BUILDING

Building the strength of, skills communities or resources to better tackle challenges

- New Hiring
- Technological Upgrades
- Training and Certifications



PLANNING

Assistance for critical pre-implementation processes

- Conceptual Site Design
- Feasibility Studies
- Operational/Financial Planning



RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Developing innovation through technology, technique, or design

- First-order Field Research
- Project Monitoring
- Nature-based Solution Innovation



**RIVER REVIVE
COALITION**

RRC's primary focus will be on shovel-ready conservation and restoration projects. Therefore, they will apply for an **implementation grant**, which would involve projects like wetland planting, invasive species removal, and water quality improvement efforts. The project will start immediately upon receiving grant funding to maximize impact.

EVALUATION

Grants will be evaluated based on criteria designed to ensure maximum environmental, social, and economic impact. Each proposal will be assessed for its alignment with the program's goals, including ecological restoration, resilience-building, and community engagement. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate innovative approaches, measurable outcomes, and cost-effectiveness while addressing critical issues such as habitat degradation, water quality improvement, and climate adaptation. This comprehensive evaluation process will ensure that funding is allocated to initiatives with the greatest potential to protect and restore the Connecticut River Watershed.

CONSERVATION AND RESOTRATION EFFORTS

How well does the proposed project address environmental problems in the watershed?

FEASIBILITY/SCALABILITY

Are the goals achievable?
Could this project scale up?

COST EFFECTIVENESS

How efficiently is the project using its funds

TECHNICAL MERIT

Are best practices being used? Are the methods evidence based?

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

How are neighboring communities impacted?

RRC's proposal will be evaluated based on its readiness to execute the project, the ecological and community benefits it offers, its potential to serve as a scalable model, and its adherence to environmental justice principles. Strong technical merit, clear feasibility, and a cost-effective approach will also play critical roles in securing funding.



USGS gathering insects at restoration site

BUDGETING

SUMMARY TABLE IN APPENDIX

The budget is allocated with 80% dedicated to direct project grants and 20% reserved for administrative costs, ensuring efficient fund management while adhering to the 25% cap on administrative costs established by the legislation.

To enhance equitable access, the funding covers up to 75% of total project costs, increasing to 90% for initiatives focused on environmental justice. This approach prioritizes support for underrepresented communities, ensuring that the benefits of restoration and resilience efforts are widely distributed throughout the watershed.

ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

- **Staff Salaries:** The largest administrative cost, set at \$300,000 annually, supports seasonal and contracted staff essential for project implementation and grant review.
- **Professional Services:** Allocated \$100,000 per year, this includes legal support, event planning, and other specialized services required to manage complex projects.
- **Transportation, Meals, and Lodging:** Budgeted at \$90,000 annually, these funds support travel and accommodations for staff and advisory board members during program-related activities.
- **Materials and Marketing:** A combined allocation of \$130,000 annually supports necessary supplies for program execution and marketing efforts to raise public awareness and engage stakeholders in the partnership's objectives.
- **Miscellaneous Expenses:** A flexible budget of \$50,000 annually is reserved for unforeseen costs that may arise during project implementation.



Long Island Sound report card

WHAT RRC CAN EXPECT FROM THE BUDGET

- **Equipment and Supplies:** Financial support for acquiring restoration tools, materials, and monitoring devices.
- **Contractual Services:** Resources to hire experts for site assessments, ecological engineering, or technical assistance.
- **Community Engagement:** Funding for workshops, educational materials, and local events to involve North Hadley residents in wetland restoration efforts.
- **Indirect Costs:** A small allocation for overhead to maintain operational continuity without diverting resources from project execution.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

FULL KPI TABLE IN APPENDIX



MEASURING PROGRAM AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE

KPI's are separated into four categories: establishment phase, administration, conservation, and funding renewal.

ESTABLISHMENT PHASE

In this phase of the program KPIs would be used to measure the efficiency of the program's initiation, key staffing, and metrics development.

ADMINISTRATION

These indicators monitor if the grant program is well managed, accountable and adaptable. They relate to the proper allocation of funds and integration of feedback and reporting.

CONSERVATION

This ensures that the project and program are accomplishing the conservation efforts it set out to do, as well as making certain grants are being equitably distributed.

FUNDING RENEWAL

It is key to measure aspects of the program that illustrate the scope of work as well as the need for additional funding. The Congressional Report is a valuable tool in this category.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR WETLAND RESTORATION

RRC will work with NFWF to create a list of project-specific KPIs that will ensure that the wetland restoration work is meeting the desired goals. Some KPIs include:

- **Wetland Area Restored:** Total acreage of wetland restored or enhanced (e.g., 10 acres in year one).
- **Biodiversity Increase:** Number of indicator species (plants, birds, amphibians) returning to restored areas.
- **Project Milestones Met:** Completion of scheduled restoration phases (e.g., invasive removal, native planting) by set deadlines, ensuring the project stays on track.
- **Volunteer Participation:** Number of community volunteers involved in restoration activities (e.g., 100 volunteers in year one). This highlights local engagement and builds support for long-term success.

SUMMARY



REFLECTING ON PROGRESS

By taking a comprehensive approach—from vision-setting to implementation—the Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Act empowers communities and stakeholders to act as stewards of their shared environment. The River Revive analogy underscores the importance of clear guidance, equitable access to resources, and a collective commitment to rejuvenation. Together, these efforts ensure that both the river and the communities it sustains will thrive for generations to come.



Scientist watching dolphins



Volunteers removing invasive water chestnut CRC

CASE STUDY:

CHESAPEAKE WILD ACT

The Chesapeake Bay provides important ecosystem services like carbon storage, clean water, and habitats that support biodiversity. To preserve these services and enhance the bay's resilience to climate change, the Chesapeake WILD Act was enacted in October 2020. This voluntary program, overseen by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, focuses on restoring the bay's ecological health by strengthening conservation partnerships across the watershed, which spans six states and the District of Columbia. Its collaborative approach and proven success in coordinating multi-state restoration efforts make it an excellent case study for the Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Act, offering valuable insights into effective partnership-driven conservation strategies.¹¹



Satellite image of the Chesapeake Bay



Ducks and geese

WILD ACT PILLARS



FISH & WILDLIFE HABITAT

Improve the functionality and connectivity of habitat for at-risk and listed fish and wildlife.



CLEAN WATER

Improve water health to benefit both human and fish/wildlife communities.



CLIMATE CHANGE

Enhance climate resilience and readiness in natural and human communities using nature-based solutions.



PUBLIC ACCESS

Equitably connect people with nature to improve wellbeing and grow support for restoration and conservation actions and funding.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Build capacity to access funding, implement coordinated restoration and conservation activities; emphasis on under-resourced partners and communities.

IMPLEMENTATION GRANT: TRACK 1

Ranging from \$75,000 to \$750,000, supports direct, on-the-ground conservation projects, stewardship efforts, and fish/wildlife habitat restoration.

PLANNING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT: TRACK 2

Up to \$75,000, designed to enhance the capacity of local and regional partners to carry out future on-the-ground conservation actions such as community-based assessment planning, design, and other forms of technical assistance.

The Chesapeake Bay WILD Act provides a valuable blueprint for the Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Act, demonstrating how clearly defined priorities and tailored grant tracks can drive meaningful change. By focusing on pillars such as improving fish and wildlife habitat, enhancing water quality, building climate resilience, increasing public access, and fostering community partnerships, the Chesapeake Bay WILD Act has effectively aligned conservation efforts with community needs.¹²



YEAR 1 PLAN

The first year of the Partnership will focus on building the infrastructure to run the program. This includes not only hiring necessary personnel for administering grants, but also identifying and bringing in partners to form the Advisory Board as well as key subject matter experts to form the proposal review committees. During this time, having metrics to measure progress will be crucial to success by acting as guard rails and indicators.

By the end of Year 1, the first grants will ideally have been dispersed, after which point the Partnership can begin in earnest to accomplish the conservation work it set out to perform.



USGS boat in Connecticut



USFWS 6-Month Volunteers

GRANT PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE

MONTHS 1-3

ESTABLISHMENT PHASE

During this time, the program will also draft grant criteria, which will serve as a foundational guideline for future grant distribution and will be presented to the Advisory Board for review.

MONTHS 4-6

RESEARCH AND PRIORITY SETTING PHASE

The team will conduct participatory meetings to gather input from underserved and high-impact areas to ensure equitable representation of needs across the watershed. This phase includes allocating initial funding for **"ready-to-go"** projects that meet set criteria.

MONTHS 7-9

GRANT APPLICATION AND EVALUATION

The program will host workshops and review grant applications to verify eligibility and assess alignment with the program's objectives. Grant recipients will be announced, and a third-quarter evaluation report will be prepared.

MONTHS 10-12

DISBURSEMENT AND REVIEW

The program will finalize contracts with grant recipients, allocate funds, and establish monitoring criteria. Key performance indicators will be evaluated, and a fourth-quarter report will be prepared and submitted to Congress.

CLOSING STATEMENTS

The Connecticut River Watershed Partnership Act is a transformative initiative aimed at addressing the challenges impacting one of New England's most vital natural resources. The watershed has been a cornerstone of regional biodiversity, community livelihoods, and cultural heritage, but it now faces significant threats from urbanization, industrial activities, and climate change. By focusing on restoration and protection, this legislation seeks to safeguard the watershed's ecological health while enhancing its resilience to future environmental challenges.

The Act's emphasis on innovation, community engagement, and equitable access to funding through its grant program ensures that diverse stakeholders—from environmental justice communities to tribal nations—are actively involved in the restoration process. Its commitment to advancing scientific research and providing technical assistance ensures that even under-resourced projects can contribute meaningfully to the watershed's recovery. Furthermore, the incorporation of lessons learned from successful programs like the Chesapeake WILD Act and the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program strengthens its foundation, offering a tested framework for achieving significant and lasting environmental impact.

This legislation has the potential to not only revitalize the watershed but also serve as a model for other large-scale restoration efforts across the nation. By investing in this vital resource today, the Act ensures that the watershed continues to provide essential ecosystem services, economic benefits, and recreational opportunities for generations to come.



FOOTNOTES

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- 4.The Nature Conservancy, 2021
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- 9.Mahmood et al. 2016
- 10.GovTrack 2024
- 11.*Chesapeake WILD*, 2024
- 12.*Chesapeake WILD* | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, n.d.



USGS survey Massachusetts

PICTURE CREDITS

Page 1: The Connecticut River - [Friends of Conte](#)
Page 2: Our Team CRWPA - MPA ESP
Page 5: Old Saybrook living Shoreline Restoration - [Estuary](#)
Page 6: The Vernon Dam - Chris Zajak - [Connecticut River Conservancy](#)
Page 7: Connecticut River and surrounding landscape, [USGS](#)
Page 8: Stormwater runoff, [USGS](#)
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Page 10: Grass at Field in Countryside - Davi Kanigan - [pexels](#)
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Page 12: Connecticut River map, [EcoRI News](#)
Page 13: USFWS staff measuring fish during electrofishing survey, CT River - [USFWS](#)
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Page 16: Connecticut with snow covered banks flowing during the winter - [USGS](#)
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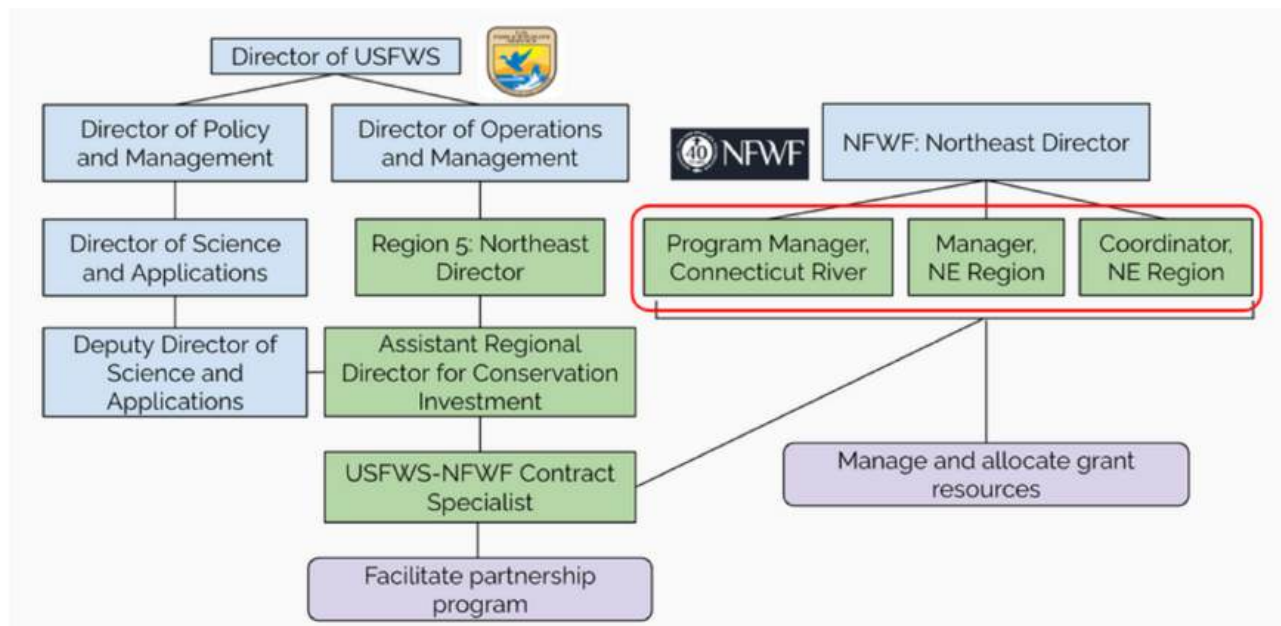
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APPENDIX (ORG CHARTS)



APPENDIX (POSITIONS)

Position Descriptions

Position	Responsibilities	Quantity	Employment type	Requirements
Grant Program Director	- Oversee grant program - Convene meetings of independent experts for grant application reviews - Meet with and update Advisory Board on grant criteria and program status	1	Contracted: NFWF Employee	at least 10 years of work experience; at least 3 years of managerial experience
Grant Program Manager	- Manage grant program, including setting up review meetings - Liaise between stakeholders, including grantees, federal and state partners, ensuring transparent and effective communication.	1	Contracted: NFWF Employee	At least 5 years of experience managing grant programs, particularly in environmental or conservation fields.
Program Coordinator	- Creates Request for Proposal structure - Monitors application process - Coordinates awarded grants	2	Contracted: NFWF Employee	At least 3 years of experience managing grant programs, particularly in environmental or conservation fields.
Grant Reviewers	- Independent experts provided stipends in exchange for reviewing grant proposals - Score applications and provide recommendations to the Grant Program Manager on which projects should receive funding.	2-4	Subcontracted under NFWF	At least 5 years of specialized experience in the field of expertise, such as river ecology, water quality assessment, habitat restoration, or climate resilience.
Assistant Regional Director for Office of Conservation Investment	- Responsible for interfacing and communication between FWS and NFWF, Advisory Board - Participates in Advisory Board	1	FWS Employee	Minimum of 10 years of experience in environmental management, conservation investment, or public sector management. 3-5 years of managerial experience, particularly overseeing large-scale conservation or environmental programs.
Contract Specialist	- Establish contracts for NFWF staff members involved in this program - Report to regional FWS staff on the program's progress	1	FWS Employee	At least 5 years of experience in federal procurement and contracting. Experience with government regulations and ensuring compliance in contract negotiations and executions.

CRW Partnership Advisory Board:

This bill creates an advisory board consisting of representatives from five watershed states, non-profits listed in the bill, local governments, tribes, NFWF, and USFWS. These representatives will, together, establish criteria for giving out grants for the Program.

CRW Grant Program: The grant program created by the bill. It will be advised by the CRW Partnership Advisory Board, and administered by the CRW Grant Review Committee

CRW Grant Review Committee:

An external body of experts on the criteria outlined by the Partnership Advisory Board. They will be convened by the Program Director for the purpose of reviewing grant applications. These experts will be from organizations that have no interest in applying for these grants, including educational institutions, private businesses, government institutions, and others.

APPENDIX (BUDGET SUMMARY TABLE)

Personal Services (PS) - All expenses that the funds would specifically pay, for any benefits	
Transportation (6%)	This accounts for travel costs related to contractors and committee activities.
Meals (4%)	This remains a smaller percentage for meals related to meetings and events.
Lodging (5%)	Slightly lower, as the need may depend on the frequency of events requiring overnight stays.

Other Than Personal Services (OTPS) - Expenses that are not salary/benefit related	
Professional Services (10%):	The percentage allocated to professional services may remain stable or even increase if your contractors require specialized services.
Staff (40%)	Since we rely on contractors, this category is the largest cost. It reflects payments made for services rendered without the ongoing costs associated with full-time salaries. We are not adding new contractors, the funds will go towards NFWF to handle the grants.
Marketing (10%)	An important category for outreach and engagement, but can be adjusted based on specific goals.
Miscellaneous (30%)	A flexible category for unforeseen expenses, which can change based on operations.
Materials (10%):	This remains consistent, supporting program materials and supplies.

APPENDIX (EXPENSES)

Expense	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total
Staff	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$300,000
Transportation	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$40,000
Meals	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$20,000
Lodging	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$30,000
Professional Services	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$100,000
Materials	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$50,000
Marketing	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$80,000
Miscellaneous	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$12,500	\$50,000
Total Per Quarter	\$167,500	\$167,500	\$167,500	\$167,500	\$670,000

APPENDIX (KPI SUMMARY TABLE)

Administration:

Measurement	Rationale
Grant Allocation Monitoring	- Ensure program is hitting pre-approved allocation targets (Implementation, Capacity Building, Planning, R&D/Monitoring) - If not, investigate cause and adjust either selection process or targets
Feedback From Applicants	- Collect responses from successful and failed applicants on the application process regarding fairness, clarity, transparency, etc - Conduct quarterly reviews of surveys within NFWF team in order to improve grant program structure

Conservation:

Measurement	Rationale
Geographic Distribution	Monitor geographic distribution of grant dispersal in order to comply with spirit of the legislation's "partnership" aspect If uneven, reassess weight given to location in selection process
Environmental Justice	Monitor grants to ensure compliance with Biden Administration's Justice40 Initiative, ie >40% of grants serve environmental justice Should the program fall short, edit guidelines for future contracted grant reviewers and consider approaching different reviewers
Grantee Reporting	Grantees will each create an established schedule with the Program Coordinator in order to hit specific milestones in their projects. It is important to monitor what percent of projects are hitting the milestones they created If they fail to comply, assist them in getting back on track and/or hold them accountable for noncompliance

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Funding Renewal:

Measurement	Rationale
Establish Scope of Issue	Number of applications, number of accepted applications, data from applicants on the scope of environmental issues, and other key indicators will be used to establish the scope of environmental issues facing the Connecticut River watershed
Compile Congressional Report	Ensure that the status of other indicators and especially the data from check-ins with grantees on their progress are recorded for use in an annual Congressional Report as mandated by the bill in order to prepare the report a month before its required date of submission If progress lags, evaluate whether current staff are sufficient to handle this work on top of their existing duties

APPENDIX (MASTER CALENDAR)

Phase	Organization Responsible	Task	Month																					
			1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11	
			W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4	W1-2	W3-4
Establishment Phase: Recruitment, Initiation and Training (Months 1-3)	DOI, USFWS	Milestone: Secretary of Interior establishes the CRW Watershed Partnership Program																						
	USFWS	Identify and invite individuals from local, state, tribal governments, NGOs, and other stakeholders across all 5 watershed states to participate in the CRW Partnership Advisory Board																						
	USFWS	Conduct initial communication with stakeholders to explain act objectives																						
	USFWS	Milestone: Complete 50% of Advisory Board members onboarding																						
	Advisory Board	Milestone: Convene the first meeting of the advisory committee to discuss project objectives, set strategic priorities and review the draft allocation criteria																						
	USFWS, NFWF	Contract Specialist negotiates grant management contract with NFWF																						
	NFWF	NFWF assigns essential CRW Grant Committee roles (Program Director, Manager, Coordinators)																						
	USFWS, NFWF	Announce program launch to inform stakeholders of new funding opportunity through press release with tentative timeline																						
	CRW Grant Committee	Create a first draft of grant criteria and present it to the Advisory Board. Milestone: final version based on Advisory Board feedback																						
	CRW Grant Committee	Subcontract 2-4 grant reviewers (from academic and professional experience relevant to the projects in the watershed) & conducts background checks on grant reviewers																						
Research, Needs Analysis, & Establishment of Priorities (Months 4-6)	USFWS	Conduct Quarter 1 evaluation and prepare report																						
	USFWS	Contact with stakeholders (local communities and environmental organizations) for initial consultations to assess needs																						
	USFWS, NFWF	Collect and analyze baseline environmental data including water quality, habitat and climate resilience data within the watershed, as well as environmental justice data																						
	Advisory Board	Identify key protected areas and project types that meet project objectives																						
	USFWS, Advisory Board	Milestone: Conduct participatory meetings to collect more opinions with focus on under-served and high-impact areas																						
	CRW Grant Committee	Prioritize initial funding that focuses on small and medium-sized projects, and headstart fund allocation																						
	Advisory Board	Conclude with Advisory Board members hiring																						
	CRW Grant Committee	Finalize evaluation process and financing standards for grant applications																						
	CRW Grant Committee, NFWF	Prepare resources and guidance for the upcoming grant application period																						
	CRW Grant Committee	Send out RFPs to open up grant proposal																						
Grant Application and Evaluation (Months 7-9)	USFWS	Milestone: Allocate first round of funding for ready to go projects																						
	USFWS	Milestone: Conduct mid-year program review and produce a report																						
	NFWF	Organize workshops to help applicants understand the funding application process																						
	NFWF	Receive applications on a rolling basis and conduct initial review to confirm eligibility																						
	CRW Grant Review Committee	Convene the funding review committee to conduct in-depth evaluation of the applications received																						
	CRW Grant Committee, Advisory Board	Share the finalists' applications with the advisory committee for final confirmation																						
	NFWF	Announce the recipients of assistance that focus on the distribution balance of funds within the watershed																						
	USFWS, NFWF	Conduct Quarter 3 evaluation and prepare report																						
	USFWS, CRW Grant Committee	Finalize and approve grants contracts																						
	USFWS, NFWF	Milestone: Allocate the funds to selected projects based on funding agreement																						
Disbursement of Grants and Performance Review (Months 10-12)	USFWS, CRW Grant Committee	Establish projects' initial performance monitoring criteria and reporting guidelines																						
	USFWS, NFWF	Milestone: Organize a kick-off event for awarded projects																						
	CRW Grant Committee	Ensure each funded project starts as scheduled and perform initial performance monitoring																						
	NFWF	Collect feedback from recipients that focuses on the clarity and fairness																						
	CRW Grant Committee	Evaluate project performance and review key indicators, such as grant allocation, distribution and environmental impacts																						
	CRW Grant Committee	Milestone: Conduct Quarter 4 evaluation; finalize end-of-year report																						
	USFWS	Milestone: Develop and submit the annual report to Congress that highlights projects that succeed and any additional funding needs																						

