Clean Water Guidance Document
Chapter 6 – Clean Water Projects (with references to Act 76 and CWSP Rule)
DRAFT Sept. 15, 2022
Version 4.0

Chapter 6. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY, SCREENING, PRIORITIZATION, AND SELECTION

Contents

Introduction

This Chapter of Guidance focuses on projects and project development funded by Water Quality Restoration Formula Grants within the context of Vermont's Act 76 of 2019. This chapter provides guidance to CWSPs, BWQCs, project implementers, landowners, stakeholders, and the public on the substance of moving a project from an idea to construction, together with other relevant topics. More specifically, this chapter includes guidance on the roles and responsibilities of various parties related to project eligibility, prioritization, co-benefits, selection, project advancement, implementation, project tracking and reporting.

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a roadmap for how to implement, and report on voluntarily implemented projects developed with funding provided to CWSPs consistent with Act 76. This chapter should not be read in isolation. Other relevant documents and policies should also be considered, including other chapters of Guidance, the Clean Water Initiative Programs' funding policy, the State's Non-Point Source Management Plan, Tactical Basin Plans, the State's Surface Water Quality Standards, and the State's Surface Water Management

Strategy, among other documents. For more information on these other documents, please see the appendix to this Guidance, or follow the links provided in this chapter.

Intended Use

The following narrative is intended for CWSPs and BWQCs as guidance for Clean Water project screening for project eligibility in order to facilitate project advancement steps from design through implementation, verification, and reporting. Note that there will be a separate Guidance chapters on CW project operation and maintenance and for project data management.

The CWSP and BWQC should be familiar with relevant guiding documents and consider projects within the context of the policies and framework established by those documents, which include the relevant Tactical Basin Plans, the Champlain and Memphremagog TMDLs, Vermont's Non-Point Vermont Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan (2021-2025), the Clean Water Funding Policy (*FY23 in development*), and other relevant surface and subsurface water quality criteria and policies. Whether a project is consistent with relevant policies is more or less a binary analysis that is established and confirmed during the project screening process. Nevertheless, the BWQC should not advance projects that it considers to be inconsistent with State law, rule, policy or practice. *How* a project meets or conforms with water quality best practices contained in State guidance documents is a factor that can also be considered but is best analyzed and in consideration of empirical data as well as viability.

Until a project is ready for preliminary design, there may not be sufficient information to know the full scope of work, eligibility, or pollutant reduction potential. As such, the following section of guidance applies primarily to projects requesting funds for 30% design onward. However, there are project types for which a 30% design is not required as part of project advancement (examples), and where some analog to the 30% design may be used as a proxy for review and selection.

This section of Guidance does not apply to proposals to support project identification through assessments/planning, or to support project development. CWSPs must follow a separate section of Guidance on project identification and development activities.

Reference to the CWSP Rule - § 39-403. Clean Water Projects. (b) On a schedule determined by the CWSP, and in consultation with the BWQC, the CWSP shall conduct an open process to solicit clean water projects for development and implementation in the basin.

Each CWSP and BWQC may decide how and when they will solicit proposals from implementers to complete project designs and implementation and how much of their fund allocation to dedicate to these project life cycle stages.

Once project design and implementation proposals have been received, the CWSP and BWQC must, based on the guidance provided below, 1) screen proposals to confirm they are *eligible* to receive Water Quality Restoration Formula Grant funds, 2) rank and prioritize the *eligible* proposals and 3) select proposals for funding. These steps are further outlined below.

Screening for Project Eligibility

> *§ 39-403. Clean Water Projects. (d) When identifying, prioritizing, and selecting clean water projects to meet a basin's pollutant reduction target, the CWSP and BWQC shall… (2) consult with the Secretary to determine project eligibility before scoring and ranking projects.*

To be eligible for Formula grant funds, proposed projects must meet the following criteria (described in further detail below):

a) All projects must comply with the Clean Water Initiative Program Funding Policy Eligibility Criteria
b) All projects must be non-regulatory, or exceed the regulatory requirements (per 10 VSA chapter 47, and not subject to the requirements of 6 V.S.A. chapter 215.
c) Projects located on agricultural lands must meet specific practice type and farm size requirements

Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) Funding Policy Eligibility Criteria

The CWIP Funding Policy serves as a communication tool to clean water project proponents and prospective grant/contract recipients, outlining DEC and external grantee/contractor roles and responsibilities related to funding programs; and criteria to determine eligible uses of funds. The Funding Policy applies to all clean water funding initiatives administered by the CWIP including Water Quality Restoration Formula Grants. The Funding Policy lists out a series of eligibility criteria that must be met for projects to receive funds administered by the CWIP. This policy is subject to change on an annual basis. CWSPs are expected to use the most current Funding Policy whenever reviewing project proposals for eligibility.

Project must be non-Regulatory

Formula grants are grants to clean water service providers to meet non-regulatory pollutant reduction requirements as described in EPA approved water quality restoration plans (i.e., such as TMDLs for Lake

Champlain and Lake Memphremagog). As such, to be eligible for Formula Grant funds projects cannot be driven by a regulatory requirement, other than where those exceptions are noted. Regulatory projects are those required/compelled by water quality-related regulatory programs. For example, a stormwater retrofit project on a private property that has more than three acres of impervious surface and is subject to the stormwater General Permit 3-9050 would be a regulatory project. As another example, a wetland enhancement project would not be eligible if it was required compensation as part of a wetland permit or restoration of a wetland violation. However, non-regulatory projects (i.e., projects performed voluntarily) may still be subject to regulatory oversight including for permitting reviews.

There may be cases where an individual project is designed to fulfill both regulatory requirements and exceed regulatory requirements to also achieve phosphorus reductions from non-regulatory/sub-jurisdictional sources. For example, a regional stormwater treatment practice designed to treat a large municipal drainage area that encompasses a Three-Acre General Permit regulatory site. In these limited instances, Formula Grant funds may be eligible to partially fund the non-regulatory components of the project. Additional Guidance is needed to define eligibility for this scenario, portion of project cost eligible for Formula Grant funds, and special provisions to ensure coordinated tracking/reporting across potentially multiple funding and regulatory programs. An addendum to this Guidance will address these considerations.

Please note that Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit regulatory projects are not eligible for Formula Grant funds. An MS4 permit regulatory project is defined as a project that contributes to MS4 community(ies) meeting MS4 permit flow and/or phosphorus reduction targets, including projects identified by the MS4 community in a flow restoration plan (FRP) and/or phosphorus control plan (PCP). The only scenario where an MS4 project could go above-and-beyond regulatory requirements is where the MS4 has, as a community, met its phosphorus reduction targets. MS4 permit minimum control measures are also ineligible for funds.

Agricultural Projects

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(6) "Clean water project" means a best management practice or other program designed to improve water quality to achieve a target established under 10 V.S.A. § 922 that:

(B) is within the following activities:

(iv) agriculture, when:

(a) it is a natural resource project as described in subdivision (B)(ii) of this paragraph that is determined to be eligible in accordance with § 39403(d)(3) of this Rule; or

(b) it is a project on agricultural land that is not subject to the RAP because the farm does not meet the minimum eligibility criteria for the RAP to apply.

Agricultural and natural resource projects on non-jurisdictional farms or farmland (i.e. lands not subject to the Required Agricultural Practices Rule) are eligible. Natural resource projects on jurisdictional farms are subject to AAFM review. CWSPs will be required to consult with AAFM quarterly on natural resource project eligibility, selection, and progress, as AAFM will determine whether such a proposed project qualifies as a clean water project. Please note that agricultural projects on jurisdictional farms are not eligible.

Note: For further clarification, please see the VAAFM Guidance: CWSP Model & Farms in App. X.

Determining Project Eligibility for New Project Types

When making a determination, the Secretary shall consider the alignment with clean water fund purpose, and net water quality benefit... When making an eligibility determination of a non-standard project type, the Secretary shall consider the alignment with clean water fund purpose, and net water quality benefit. The Secretary must also make a determination of milestones and deliverables, and performance measures associated with a new project type and as it comports with meeting TMDL pollution reduction goals.

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§ 923 (c)(2) Determining Project Type Eligibility Outside of Standard Project Types. Upon the request of a CWSP, the Secretary shall evaluate a proposed clean water project type and issue a determination as to whether the proposed clean water project type is eligible to receive funding as a part of a Water Quality Restoration

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h. Natural Resource Review Training

i. Water Quality Screening Tool
ii. Project Eligibility Screening Tool
iii. Wetland Screening Tool
iv. Pollution Reduction, Design Life, and Cost Effectiveness

Project Prioritization (§ 39-403(d)(1).

Pollution Reduction, Design Life, and Cost Effectiveness. The following section provides required and suggested criteria and data sources to inform these ranking schedules to prioritize eligible projects. Once the CWSP and BWQC have established a ranking schedule and scoring process, the CWSP shall be responsible for applying this scoring process to all eligible proposed projects and presenting the ranked project proposals for final selection by the BWQC. CWSPs and BWQCs may elect to confer on scoring and jointly consider and agree to adjustments to scoring during BWQC deliberations on project selection.

Reference to the CWSP Rule - § 39-403. Clean Water Projects. When identifying, prioritizing, and selecting clean water projects to meet a basin's pollutant reduction target, the CWSP and BWQC shall:

(1) develop and implement a project ranking schedule and scoring process to ensure that the highest priority projects are developed, designed, and implemented within the available funding provided by the Formula Grant;

(4) consider empirical project-specific factors including the pollution reduction estimate, cost effectiveness of that reduction, design life, cost of operation and maintenance of the project, and conformance with the basin plan;

(5) consider co-benefits provided by the project; and

(6) prioritize projects in accordance with any additional requirements imposed by the Secretary's guidance.

The following section provides required criteria to apply in CWSPs ranking schedules to prioritize eligible projects. Required criteria include pollution reduction cost effectiveness and other factors, such as local/basin-specific and cobenefit criteria, listed in this section. While these criteria are required to be factored in project prioritization, CWSPs have flexibility in how these criteria are further defined and weighted in basin-specific ranking schedules. However, CWSPs are required to follow the pollution reduction cost effectiveness equation/calculation, described below, to ensure consistency across basins and project types. Once the CWSP and BWQC have established a ranking schedule and scoring process, the CWSP shall be responsible for applying this consistent scoring process to all eligible proposed projects and presenting the ranked project proposals for final selection by the BWQC. CWSPs and BWQCs may elect to confer on scoring and jointly consider and agree to adjustments to scoring during BWQC deliberations on project selection.

Pollution Reduction Cost Effectiveness

i. Estimating annual average total phosphorus load reduction (kg/yr): The DEC will provide CWSPs, BWQCs, and implementers training on and access to pollution reduction calculator tools consistent with the methods included on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Tracking and Accounting of Phosphorous. CWSPs shall use this calculator to determine the pollution reduction value of a proposed project (or to confirm the pollution reduction value provided by the project proponent/implementer). CWSPs shall use this pollution reduction value and the project proposal's budget to determine cost-effectiveness.

(1) Note: There remain certain project types for methods to estimate total phosphorus load reductions are still under development, such as for wetland restoration.
(2) Note: Floodplain restoration projects with a floodplain storage phosphorus reduction benefit receive 100% credit in year 1 and then performance tapers down to 50% credit in year 2 and beyond. For these project types, the year 2 and beyond value (see Functioning Floodplain Initiative Tool, Stream Stability and Storage Credit Summary, "Years 2+ Credit (kg/yr)" column for value) should be applied in the Formula Grant pollution reduction cost effectiveness calculation. The year 2 and beyond value represents the performance of a project at the 15-year implementation target timeframe.

ii. Project Costs for Budget Development: Project proposal budgets must include the projected project costs proposed to be covered by the Formula Grant, as well as any match/leveraging from whatever design phase a project begins with Formula Grant funds through to implementation. For purposes of Formula Grant cost effectiveness estimates, project cost may exclude match/leveraged funds from **non-state sources**, effectively incentivizing leveraging of local or federal funds in project scoring. CWSPs may elect to present cost effectiveness values, both including and excluding match/leveraged sources, to the BWQC for consideration. (Note: CWSPs will still be expected to report actual project costs, including match/leveraged dollars, at the project-level to ensure data reflect the true cost of projects for future revisions to Formula Grant Fund Allocation Methodology). Project proposal budgets can come from professional estimates provided by engineers, archeological consultants, construction companies and implementers. (Note: operation and maintenance costs will be evaluated and calculated separately.)

iii. Pollution reduction cost-effectiveness shall be calculated as follows:

(a) Cost effectiveness ($/kg/yr) = (15 years/design life years) * (total capital project cost (dollars) for design and construction) / (annual average total phosphorus source load reduction (kg/yr))

Please note regarding design life: For purposes of this calculation, design life is capped at a 15-year maximum to be consistent with the Formula Grant target and implementation timeframe. Additional context is provided below. The calculation includes a design life cost multiplier to adjust down cost effectiveness of projects with a design life of less than 15 years, acknowledging that additional projects would need to be implemented to recover phosphorus reductions for a project with a design life of less than 15 years.

i. Example for project with 15-year design life:
   a. Total capital project cost for design and construction = $500,000

b. Annual average total phosphorus source load reduction = 400 kilograms/year
c. Design life = 15 years
d. Design life cost multiplier = 15 years/15-year design life = 1
e. Cost effectiveness = $1,250 per kilogram/year

ii. Example for project with 7-year design life:
a. Total capital project cost for design and construction = $500,000
b. Annual average total phosphorus source load reduction = 400 kilograms/year
c. Design life = 7 years
d. Design life cost multiplier = 15 years/7-year design life = 2.14
e. Cost effectiveness = $2,675 per kilogram/year

Additional Notes/Context on Pollution Reduction Cost Effectiveness Equation:

(a) The pollution reduction cost effectiveness equation represents the cost of designing and constructing/implementing each new increment of phosphorus reduction over the 15-year Formula Grant target and implementation timeframe. It should be noted that the pollution reduction cost effectiveness equation, applied in the context of Formula Grants and the 15-year implementation target timeframe is distinct from the cost effectiveness equation applied in the *Vermont Clean Water Initiative Annual Performance Report.* The Performance Report presents cost effectiveness as the total phosphorus load reduction over the project's projected design life (not annualized) divided by the project's construction/implementation state funding total.

(b) The pollution reduction cost effectiveness equation must use **source load**[1] to estimate the total phosphorus load reduction to be consistent with the total phosphorus load unit of the Formula Grant targets.

(c) Project lifespans longer than 15 years are not factored in this pollution reduction cost effectiveness equation, as this equation is focused on cost effectiveness toward meeting the Formula Grant target under the 15-year implementation timeframe. However, projects, such as river corridor easements, with lifespans longer than 15 years may receive additional points in the scoring to reflect long-term benefits/performance (see "Design Life Beyond 15 Years" criteria below).

(d) In future years, annual operation and maintenance costs may be added as a component of pollution reduction cost effectiveness. In the interim, annual operation and maintenance costs may be factored in other project prioritization criteria (see "Cost of Operation and Maintenance of the Project" criteria below).

[1] As opposed to the delivered load, which is a function of attenuation factors

Pollution reduction cost effectiveness in the context of project ranking

The pollution reduction cost effectiveness of the project is a key metric for ranking projects as it allows an apples-to-apples comparison of a projects' efficiency against all other projects. This analysis allows the CWSP/BWQC to look at the impact any given dollar has on reducing phosphorus pollution. In other words, the better the cost effectiveness, the larger the impact of each dollar spent, when compared against other projects. Cost effectiveness is a function of the cost as measured against the annual total phosphorus load reduction value of the project, as described in the section on "Pollution Reduction Cost Effectiveness" above. The metric is a combination of factor 2 (project impact) and factor 4 (project cost). The cost effectiveness of a project is key metric for ranking projects against each other, as cost inefficient projects might not be worth pursuing.

(1) In a given solicitation round, projects will be ranked against each other based on cost-effectiveness. Each CWSP and BWQC should consider the cost-effectiveness of the total project score.

(2) During early project phases some projects will have higher levels of uncertainty in terms of pollution reduction cost effectiveness and other scoring criteria inputs (e.g., landowner commitment, project feasibility). The degree of uncertainty for scoring criteria inputs may be factored into project scoring, such as for co-benefits).

(3) If project parameters impacting project cost and/or pollution/phosphorus reduction estimates change substantially (i.e., to the extent it would impact project's relative ranking and desirability for funding), as a project advances through design stages, CWSPs shall re-evaluate the project's pollution reduction cost effectiveness, re-present its pollution reduction cost effectiveness to the BWQC, and determine if the project remains a priority for funds.

    (a) When a project's cost effectiveness is re-evaluated as part of project advancement, the project cost shall include **all prior and future estimated costs covered under the Formula Grant** in the cost effectiveness calculation.

    (b) Change in match/leverage funds from non-state sources would also trigger a re-evaluation of a project's pollution reduction cost effectiveness. For example, if the project's cost effectiveness was originally evaluated assuming 20% leveraged funds, and the leveraged funds fall through, the project's Formula Grant pollution reduction cost effectiveness value would change.

(4) The Water Quality Restoration Formula Grant Targets and Fund Allocation Methodology provides benchmarks to consider reasonable values for cost effectiveness at the sector and project category-level (i.e., cost per unit phosphorus

reduced, referred to as “cost rates”). Additionally, the Functioning Floodplains Initiative (FFI) Tool contains a lookup table with pollution reduction cost effectiveness benchmarks to further evaluate river/floodplain restoration projects at the project type/best management practice-level.

Other Criteria to Consider in Project Scoring

This includes the cost of operation and maintenance of the project, design life beyond 15 years, conformance with the basin plan, and co-benefits which shall account for the remaining percentage of the total project score beyond the pollution reduction cost effectiveness equation. For instance, if the cost-effectiveness rank accounts for 60% of the total project score, then cost of operation and maintenance of the project, design life, conformance with the basin plan, and co-benefits shall account for 40% of the total project score. The CWSP and BWQC may determine their own methodologies for accounting for these components.

i. <u>Cost of Operation and Maintenance of the Project</u>
Operations and maintenance costs may be added to the cost effectiveness calculations once a consistent process for estimating these costs across most project types is available. However, before this time CWSPs and BQWCs shall consider quantitative estimates of operation and maintenance costs where available and where not available qualitative estimates for the operation and maintenance costs for a project over the project design life.

ii. <u>Design Life Beyond 15 years</u>
Design life is the length that a project is expected to perform. The pollution reduction cost-effectiveness calculation and CWSP targets include consideration for projects with a design life of shorter than 15 years. There are considerable benefits to projects that have a design life beyond 15 years as continued phosphorus reductions will be necessary to meet water quality standards into the future.

iii. <u>Local, Basin Specific Prioritization Framework</u> (conformance with the Basin Plan)

a) In considering a project ranking framework, CWSPs and BWQCs should also consider how projects may address the following:
    i. Treat or assess a water quality problem identified by physical, biological, or chemical monitoring in a target watershed identified in a State-sanctioned assessment or Tactical Basin Plan using:
    ii. Current monitoring and assessment data (within the past 10 years), or
        1. Long-term trend data (e.g., LaRosa Monitoring Program).
    iii. Be identified as a (medium – high) priority in a State supported assessment, such as a Storm Water Master Plan or a Lake Watershed Action Plan. Projects ID in State supported assessment plans greater than 10 years old may need additional

information and/or update of data to confirm they are still relevant and feasible in the current conditions at the site.

iv. Be a chronic problem or acute issue leading to a chronic problem in priority area not identified in an assessment that is:
    1. Supported by water quality monitoring data;
    2. Supported by DEC staff (WSMD) through other forms of documented evidence of impact.

Co-Benefits

As noted elsewhere, the primary consideration upon which a CWSP is evaluated is its ability to implement projects that reduce phosphorus pollution from voluntarily implemented (e.g., non-regulatory projects). CWSPs and BWQCs will consider the phosphorus reduction potential of a project, together with any co-benefits that might exist. Part of this review necessarily determines which co-benefits are present in a proposed project, which are not, and how important they are. Other structural or physical impacts or risks of a project should also be considered as part of this review. Projects that do not have a net-positive water quality benefit should not be selected. When choosing between multiple, eligible projects, BWQCs will need to weigh the various co-benefits and project aspects against each other.

The majority of the clean water project types not only help in meeting Vermont's water quality goals under the Lake Champlain and Memphremagog TMDLs, but also can meet other restoration goals not only for these lakes, but for the local waterways and landscapes within Vermont's major river basins. These conservation practices can provide multiple benefits by providing economic and public health benefits; reducing nutrient pollution; and improving local waterways and wetlands by helping with their restoration and protection. Per the reference in Chapter 4 of Act 76 Guidance, BWQCs may establish policy around how co-benefits are considered in the project identification and prioritization process. DEC recommends that if a potential project negatively impacts a co-benefit (e.g., wetlands impact) then it should receive negative points for co-benefits scoring.

a) Vermont emphasizes "locally driven" strategies and co-benefit identification for the TMDL Phase 3 content of Tactical Basin Plans that correlate to those co-benefits envisioned as part of the Act 76 framework. Co-benefits are those that not only result in water quality improvements but also address other water quality restoration goals (e.g., other water quality impairments within river basins, and natural resource uses and values), local water quality benefits, as well as economic and ecosystem service benefits generated from restoration activities.
b) Co-benefits can include but are not limited to:
    - Environmental, Social, Economic, Cultural, and Public Health Benefits
    - Wetland Functions and Values
    - Aquatic Habitat and Stream Health (e.g., brook trout habitat)
    - Healthy Watersheds
    - Climate Change/ Flood Resilience
    - Forest Buffers

- Tree Canopy (urban areas) which reduces thermal modification
- Carbon Sequestration
- Environmental Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ex: indigenous values and perspectives)
- Protected Lands
- Public Access
- Recreation
- Hazard Mitigation
- Harmful (toxic) Algae Bloom (HAB) Mitigation
- Community Engagement Metrics

c) Co-Benefits can be viewed as providing

a. Natural Resource Uses and Values
   - E.g., see Vermont Wetland Evaluation Form

b. Vermont's Existing and Designated Uses (per the VT Water Quality Standards), such as
   - Recreation – swimming, fishing, boating
   - Aquatic habitat improvement (fisheries)
   - Aesthetics

c. Ecosystem Services, such as
   - Flood resiliency – see the UVM Gund Institute's Economic Valuation of the Otter Creek during Tropical Storm Irene
   - Healthy watershed – see Contingent valuation studies (i.e., willingness to pay for a healthy ecosystem)

d. Natural Infrastructure Economic Benefits
   - Value of Green versus Gray infrastructure investments
     - land acquisition to protect drinking water supply as part of a source protection area plan.
     - Green Stormwater Infrastructure to treat SW before it enters the municipal stormwater system

e. Protection of High-Quality Waters
   - As identified using biological or chemical data as defined under the VT Water Quality Standards (DEC, 2017)

**Note - See NR206 report and co-benefit checklist in appendix X*

Additional Project Scoring and Selection Considerations

Once a CWSP has screened project proposals for eligibility and applied preliminary prioritization scores based on the guidance provided in Section 2 of this chapter, the CWSP shall present the prioritized list to the BWQC for final scoring and selection. BWQCs will typically meet quarterly and will review the slate of proposed projects presented to them for consideration at that open meeting. BWQCs will follow the operating procedures outlined in Chapter 4, as well as any supplemental governing procedural rules they adopt for their meetings.

Projects should be considered with reference to the criteria described in Chapter 6, and in consideration of the following framework which can be used to help organize the CWSPs and BWQCs review and analysis. Projects should be preliminarily ranked based on scoring, which includes overall cost effectiveness based on estimated project cost and total phosphorus load. Yet, there are other relevant considerations beyond these criteria, and the factors below should be reviewed when prioritizing and selecting projects (or not) for advancement.

BWQCs are not obligated to select any projects on the prioritized list and may reserve the right to reject any and all proposals if found to insufficiently meet the cost-efficiencies needed based on the Formula Grant Target and Fund Allocation Methodology. Once projects have been selected for funding, the CWSPs shall initiate procurement of services to implement the selected projects, as appropriate. Please see Chapter 3 of Guidance for more on procurement. Any projects not selected for funding, due to limited phosphorus benefits, in a given round can be considered for funding under to the Water Quality Enhancement Block Grant Holders (if requested by the project proponent) for consideration in their next grant round. *However, due to the availability of other funding (e.g. enhancement grants), BWQCs should indicate which rejected projects they want to reconsider in a future meeting, and which projects are firmly rejected (the latter of which is required in order for a project to be eligible to apply for State enhancement grant funds).*

The overall cost of a project as well as its cost efficiency must be considered. Cost can be reviewed either by phase, or if known, for the entire project (including operations and maintenance). Project cost could be established by soliciting quotes for the project, based on the project design. The cost for the project and/or for phase of development can be compared against the average/median cost data for similar projects. While cost-efficiency is a key metric for directly comparing the impact of one project to another, cost alone is also an important consideration for weighing the risk of a project. A more expensive project represents more risk, where a less costly project represents less risk.

Cost efficiency, project cost, and overall pollution reduction are the primary considerations in ranking, but intangible factors such as a project's expected durability/design life, the timing needed for implementation (e.g., seasonal concerns, labor availability, readiness to proceed, time needed to complete), whether the project is new or innovative, and other risk factors are also relevant considerations for a BWQC to determine. These factors may be considered in weighting one project over another, all other things being equal.

Other Important Resources for Project Scoring and Selection

a) Other important online tools for use in the development and implementation of a project ranking schedule and scoring process can be found via the Clean Water Portal, which includes the following:
    i. The Clean Water Projects Explorer is an interactive application that allows interested parties to geographically search for details about individual state-

funded clean water projects such as project funding, project outputs, and nutrient reductions.

ii. The Watersheds Project Database Search is the publicly accessible search interface for the Watershed Project Database which includes Clean Water Initiative Program funded projects, as well as potential projects in various stages of development identified though Tactical Basin Planning.
    1. See also the Clean Water Project Data Management in the Watershed Projects Database (WPD)

iii. DEC's Permit Navigator

iv. Stormwater Treatment Practice (STP) Calculator estimates the total phosphorus load reduction from a stormwater treatment practice based on practice parameters.

b) Additional online tools (that are currently in development) will include:

i. Functioning Floodplain Initiative (FFI) tool which is a Web-based mapping and tracking tool used to support identification of stream and floodplain restoration project opportunities for water quality, flood resiliency, and habitat functions as well as provide estimates of phosphorus reduction for river and floodplain restoration projects

ii. Phosphorous Calculator tools for buffer plantings, lake shore projects, forestry projects, and Road projects.

iii. Forestlands Spatial Assessment Data (currently in development)