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**Date:** August 15, 2023  
**To:** Basin 5 Water Quality Council  
**CC:** Karen Bates, DEC, Watershed Planner  
**From:** Dan Albrecht, CCRPC, Basin 5 CWSP Manager  
**Re:** 1) Considerations/criteria for votes regarding funding of Project ID / Assessment Projects  
2) Comments on NRPC private roads proposal

- 1) **Here are considerations which were first proposed for use at our May meeting. They are repeated here verbatim.**

Unlike the first Call for Applications where CCRPC as CWSP and the Basin 5 Council used the “70-20-10” point criteria to score the cost-efficiency, co-benefits and other criteria respectively of four Design Proposals received, for our recent 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Applications the only proposal received by the May 10<sup>th</sup> deadline was the one submitted by CCRPC for *Project ID/Assessment: Mill River, Stonebridge Brook, Mallets Creek, Allen Brook*. To aid the Council in deciding how to gauge whether the CCRPC proposal is worthy of funding here are some points to consider.

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> Call for Applications issued by CCRPC: *Assessment/Identification and Development projects* will be assessed differently on such metrics as likelihood of success in generating/developing non-regulatory water quality improvement projects in Basin 5 with a favorable ratio of dollars spent per kilogram of phosphorus reduced. These types of projects will be assessed on a qualitative basis and a recommendation will be made by CWSP staff to the BWQC regarding potential benefits of these types of project applications relative to available grant funds.

From Addison County’s RFP for Project Development, re: General Project Scoping: *Does the proposal describe the steps planned to move the project(s) forward to specific development? What is the timeline? How many projects will be moved forward?*

From June 3, 2022 Final Formula Grant Fund Allocations See “Cost Rate Calculations for Project Identification and Development” starting on page 11 and see Table 7 on page 35. This table suggests spending 7% of available funds annually on project identification and development which translates to \$34,714. However as noted on page 12, This cost rate and fund allocation methodology is intended to reflect, at a high-level, the cost of reducing a unit of phosphorus, annualized over the roughly fifteen-year implementation timeframe. It does not dictate how Formula Grants are allocated year-to-year at the project-level, acknowledging that the proportion of dollars awarded by project step (identification, design, construction) will vary year-to-year. For example, CWSPs may increase the percentage of funds for project identification and development work in year one, if they find that they do not have enough projects to meet targets, and in subsequent years, increase percentage of funds for design/engineering and implementation. Guidance will further define how reasonable progress is monitored as projects progress through steps from identification to implementation.

## 2) Comments on NRPC private roads proposal

First, here is a question-and-answer dialogue I recently had with NRPC staff:

*The only thing that is giving me pause about the proposal is the relatively high number of staff hours.*

*Can you summarize*

*Q: -how many sites will be visited by staff and how many times*

We assumed one half day for each of the three towns for two staff members for Task 2. This will be for all identified sites, which are noted on the map in the application. There are 15 total sites. In task 5.4, sites will be visited that have been determined as feasible in the preliminary site visits. This visit will be with the engineer/designer. This will be one day's worth of work.

*Q: -what is the target # of sites which will receive more intensive work in terms of asking the consultant to produce a 10% design and guesstimate for construction cost and p-removal*

The target is up to six sites for design, aiming for one to two projects per town.

*Q: -also investing 10 hours for RFP work seems odd if the eventual contract will only be a \$2k...*

This is unfortunate but accurate. The amount exceeds the \$1000 micro-purchase floor contained in the rule. The estimate recognizes all the steps of the request for quotes, follow up, evaluation, and ultimately selecting and contracting. We plan to incorporate language in the solicitation (regarding future phases and asking for estimates) that would allow us to avoid repeating the process at future phases.

*Q: Also, one big question, if these are private road projects, why do you need to visit all the Selectboards?*

We believe going to the selectboard or town officials will leverage our ability to reach out to landowners. It will also be a time for us to gauge whether the town is interested and approves of this work going on in their towns. From prior experience working with town road crews, even when a road is private, the crews are aware of these roads and potential issues on them. In retrospect, the proposal should have been worded "Selectboards or other appropriate municipal officials"

Additional comments/questions/concerns are as follows.

- The proposal cost is approximately \$24,000 and will result in further investigation of up to six sites for an average cost of \$4,000 per site for completion of project development steps and some initial design work.
- The proposal will result in procurement of a contractor who would be able to work on these six sites not only for project development work but any additional phases after that (Preliminary Design, Final Design, Construction oversight, etc.)
- With average consultant per-hour costs in the range of \$60-\$100 per hour, this means an allocation of about 4 hours of consultant time per site, which seems inadequate to cover the work being requested of them.

Given my comments above and recognizing that we are in uncharted waters in investigating the p-reduction potential from private road projects, I would recommend:

- a) shifting dollars from staff time towards consultant time
- b) Checking in with the CWSP and the Council once the top sites have been identified and land/road owner permission has been secured to see
  1. what costs have been incurred so far
  2. has DEC provided any more guidance on how to account for p-reduction from private roads
  3. other issues that may have arisen such as responsibility for maintenance, etc.
- c) based upon this check-in decide whether to adjust the budget and work plan accordingly.