



**Request for Proposals**  
**Surface Water Improvement Fund Grants**  
**CUYAHOGA COUNTY ONLY—01/09/12**

Dear Cuyahoga County Water Resource Management Partner:

We are pleased to announce that the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) is soliciting proposals for grants awarded from the recently established **Surface Water Improvement Fund**. Grants up to \$200,000 will be awarded to various local organizations for the implementation of projects completed in **CUYAHOGA COUNTY ONLY** that address nonpoint source pollution and/or storm water runoff and result in water quality improvements in Ohio's streams, rivers and lakes. Most grants that will be awarded will be less than the maximum \$200,000. Grants will be awarded for a two year term—as a result, it is anticipated that most awards will be made for single site-specific projects that are (or are nearly) construction-ready.

**Background:** The Surface Water Improvement Fund (SWIF) was created in 2008 and authorizes Ohio EPA to provide grant funding to applicants such as local governments, park districts, conservation organizations and others listed below. As we did in FY10, Ohio EPA anticipates applying for additional funding under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, however, we anticipate a minimum of \$1.5 million being available for FY12 SWIF grants in Cuyahoga County.

**Eligible Applicants:** The following entities are eligible to receive grant funding from the Surface Water Improvement Fund:

- Local municipalities, counties and townships within Cuyahoga County
- Park Districts
- Cuyahoga County Soil & Water Conservation District
- 501(c)(3) Nonprofit Conservation Groups with land managing responsibilities
- Watershed Groups (with local government sponsorship)

**Eligible Projects:** Water quality improvement projects eligible for SWIF grant funding include:

- Innovative storm water management projects
- Stream restoration and re-naturalization
- Riparian restoration and protection
- Wetland restoration and protection

A more detailed listing of sample projects that are eligible for SWIF grant funding is included on pages 3 and 4 of this Request for Proposals.

**Priority Funding:** This county-specific round of SWIF grants is targeted to Cuyahoga County waters where nonpoint source pollution is a significant cause of aquatic life use impairments. Projects that eliminate such impairments and/or that restore impaired waters will score significantly higher in the review process and receive more favorable consideration.

Grants awarded under the SWIF will be done so following a competitive process. Projects demonstrating the following at the time of application will receive more favorable consideration during the review process:

- A readiness to proceed.
- Site-specific information or a specifically defined area of focus.
- Appropriate “rights-of-entry” and/or landowner authorization to work on the site
- Consistency with an approved Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), endorsed watershed action plan, and/or an approved Remedial Action Plan (RAP).
- Evidence that successful completion will result in the elimination of impairments, restoration of natural hydrologic conditions, reduction and/or passive treatment of storm water runoff and/or improvement of riparian or in-stream habitat conditions.
- Allowable, appropriate and reasonable project costs.
- Sponsors with the appropriate authority to complete the proposed project.

In addition, the Ohio EPA’s director may elect to award SWIF funds for other projects when doing so may result in the elimination of impairments and/or advancement of nonpoint source management capacity.

**Grant Amounts:** Applicants may request up to \$200,000 in SWIF grant funding. There are **no local match requirements**, however, applicants providing local matching funds (*cash match only—no in-kind services will be counted as match for scoring purposes*) will receive additional points during the grant review process.

**Grant Terms and Requirements:** SWIF grants will be awarded for a two-year period. Successful applicants will be required to execute a formal grant agreement with Ohio EPA and projects must be completed within the two-year grant year period. *Projects that are “shovel-ready” will receive higher consideration.*

**Public Outreach Requirements:** All applications for SWIF grants must include project-specific public outreach activities (such as public meetings, project tours, signs, newsletters, and fact sheets) describing how the successes of the project will be communicated throughout the community. Costs associated with project-specific public outreach activities are eligible as a cost component of a SWIF grant, but may not exceed five percent (5%) of total project costs. *General nonpoint source and/or environmental education and outreach activities are NOT eligible for SWIF funding.*

# Sample Project Listing

A listing of the types of eligible projects for SWIF grant funding follows.

## **Innovative Storm Water Demonstration Projects**

Uncontrolled runoff from storm events may be a serious contributor of nonpoint source pollutants to some of Ohio's streams. Many urban areas in Ohio are required to regulate and/or manage storm water flow and do so under storm water permits issued by Ohio EPA. (SWIF grants may not be used to implement any activities required under storm water or as mitigation for other permits such as those issued under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act). Recent trends in storm water management have identified innovative practices and techniques that are showing increasing promise in the management of storm water. Ohio EPA is interested in promoting these practices by funding local projects that demonstrate these innovative storm water management practices. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- Retrofitting public commons or parking areas with permeable pavements.
- Installing small scale green roofs on public buildings
- Installing bio-filtration islands and/or vegetated retention structures such as large public rain gardens\* or large infiltration planting areas.
- Installing passive "treatment trains" combining multiple BMPs such as pocket wetlands, bio-filtration islands and others.
- Constructing storm water treatment wetlands.
- Constructing rainwater harvesting and reuse systems on public buildings or facilities.
- Other practices designed to demonstrate innovative storm water management.

*\*Surface water improvement funding **may not** be used for projects such as rain gardens, rain barrels or others conducted on lands owned by private for-profit businesses and/or individual homeowners.*

*Examples of successful storm water demonstration projects completed using SWIF grants may be found at the Seven Hills City Hall, North Olmsted City Hall, Mayfield Heights City Hall, and at Cumberland Park in the city of Cleveland Heights.*

## **Stream Restoration and/or Re-naturalization Projects**

Stream restoration or re-naturalization projects that restore in-stream habitat, natural flow conditions and stable morphological conditions are highly encouraged. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Natural stream channel restoration where site conditions are appropriate.
- Stream bank stabilization, using materials other than rip-rap.
- Levee/dike removal or modification to reconnect streams to flood plain areas.
- Lowhead dam removal and/or modification of larger dams

- In-stream habitat restoration
- Other projects that restore natural stream ecology, morphology and flow.

Stream restoration projects will receive a higher score when restored areas are protected with conservation easements and/or other riparian protection measures such as riparian ordinances. Any easements acquired using SWIF funding must be done so consistent with provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 5301.67(A);

*Examples of successful stream restoration projects that are consistent with the types of projects we anticipate funding with SWIF funding may be found at Highland Hills Golf Course in Cleveland, the Shaker Heights Middle School or at the Holden Arboretum in northeast Ohio. Examples of successful dam removal projects may be found at the city of Kent, Munroe Falls or in the Cleveland Metroparks Euclid Creek Reservation.*

### **Riparian Restoration and/or Protection Projects**

Projects that propose to protect high quality riparian areas along high quality streams and/or to restore impacted riparian areas along impaired streams are encouraged. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to the following:

- Riparian plantings using native hardwood tree and shrub species
- Riparian wetland restoration
- Invasive species management in riparian wetland and/or forested areas
- Floodplain re-naturalization projects
- Levee/dike removal or modification to reconnect streams to flood plain areas.

*The stream restoration sites listed above also provide good examples of riparian restoration activities that would be eligible under the SWIF grant program.*

### **Wetland Protection, Restoration and/or Renaturalization**

Wetland areas play a critical role in the effective filtering of nonpoint source pollutants/nutrients. We are particularly interested in funding projects that protect or restore existing wetland areas that are currently being degraded by land uses such as farming, mowing or active development. Eligible wetland projects include but are not limited to the following:

- Restoration of previous naturally occurring wetland areas that have been converted to farmland, parkland and/or other upland uses.
- Replanting of impacted wetland areas using native plants, tree and shrubs species that naturally occur in Ohio.
- Control, management and/or eradication of non-native invasive species in high quality naturally occurring wetland areas.

**Surface Water Improvement funding may NOT be used for the construction of highly engineered wetlands on sites where wetlands never previously existed.**

*An example of a successful wetland restoration project funded using a SWIF grant may be found at the Shaker Lakes Nature Center in Shaker Heights, Ohio.*

**Ineligible Projects:** The following activities are **not** eligible for SWIF grant funding:

1. Logjam removal projects and/or drainage ditch maintenance or management.
2. Projects to repair and/or replace home sewage treatment systems.
3. Projects required under enforcement order or a supplemental environmental project required as part of a settlement agreement or required as mitigation under conditions of a regulatory permit.
4. Any project that is part of a nutrient trading program.
5. Projects that propose the construction of dikes or levees within a floodplain.
6. Projects that propose best management practices (BMPs) or “end-of-pipe treatments” which are either required or anticipated to be required under an NPDES permit or a permit to install.
7. Projects required under Phase 1 or Phase 2 NPDES storm water compliance.
8. Research or monitoring activities.

### **Application Deadline and Review Procedures**

The deadline for submitting SWIF grant applications is close of business **March 31, 2012**. Applications **must** be complete and postmarked by the above date to be considered for funding. Applications postmarked (or hand-delivered) after this date will be returned to the applicant without further consideration.

Please submit **three** (3) copies of the complete application with **original (blue ink)** signatures and **one** (1) copy of the application in **Microsoft Word** format on a CD. Completed applications may be mailed or delivered to:

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency  
Division of Surface Water  
Attn: Russ Gibson, NPS Program Manager  
50 West Town Street, Suite 700  
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049

Upon receipt, all SWIF grant applications will be reviewed for completeness, technical merit and adherence to the SWIF grant RFP criteria. Applications found to be administratively complete will undergo a comprehensive review using criteria designed to evaluate and score the following:

- Environmental results likely to be achieved;
- Status of TMDL report and/or local watershed planning efforts;
- Overall effectiveness of the project;
- Feasibility of completing the proposed project in a timely manner;
- Applicant's capability to administer state grant funds;
- Project's readiness to proceed;
- The project includes a site specific location;
- The long term benefits of the project;
- The cost effectiveness of the project;
- Existing environmental quality and restorability of the watershed; and
- Project specific educational and outreach activities.

In addition to the above general criteria that are applicable to all applicants, projects also will be evaluated using specific technical criteria developed for the specific type of proposed project.

Upon completion of all reviews, applications will be ranked according to their review scores and recommendations for funding will be developed based upon this ranking. Funding decisions will be made by the director of Ohio EPA. We anticipate that grant awards should be announced prior to July 1, 2012. Successful applicants will be required to execute a formal grant agreement and adhere to all requirements of the SWIF grants program.

### **Application Materials and Technical Assistance**

Applications are available at the Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water (DSW) homepage located at [www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/nps/index.aspx](http://www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/nps/index.aspx). Applications are also available at Ohio EPA's Northeast District Office.

We appreciate your interest in the SWIF grants and look forward to working with you to help Ohio meet important water quality goals. If after reviewing this information you require additional assistance or have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Division of Surface Water grants staff at 614-644-2869 or 614-644-2020.

Sincerely,



George Elmaraghy, P.E., Chief  
Division of Surface Water

GAE/rg/jh