



THE
CONSERVATION
TRUST

A Manitoba Climate and Green Plan Initiative
delivered by The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation

Guidelines

2018/2019

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Conservation Trust

About the Conservation Trust

The Conservation Trust was established in 2018 as part of Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan to fund activities that promote the conservation of natural resources by creating, conserving, or enhancing [natural infrastructure](#) for the benefit of Manitobans.

The Trust is held by The Winnipeg Foundation and revenues are managed by the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC). As a proposal-driven fund, the Trust invites grant applications from qualifying Manitoba organizations for on-the-ground projects that benefit watersheds, habitat and wildlife, connecting people and nature, advancing innovation and conservation planning, and enhancing soil on Manitoba's [working landscapes](#). The Trust will focus on providing a broad range of [ecological goods and services](#) (EG&S) to Manitobans.

The activities supported by the Conservation Trust will conserve biodiversity, increase production of harvestable wildlife, mitigate floods and droughts, improve water quality by decreasing nutrients and other pollutants entering waterways, improve climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration and reduction of other greenhouse gases, improve soil health and decrease soil erosion. Projects may also provide other value to Manitobans, such as improving recreational opportunities to connect people to nature. Highest priority will be given to projects and project sites that demonstrate significant and/or multiple EG&S outcomes. The majority of funding will go towards the landscape-based proposals for watersheds, habitat, and wildlife.

A thorough review process is designed to select projects that meet or exceed basic eligibility requirements, including:

What is Natural Infrastructure?

Natural Infrastructure is a strategically planned and managed network of natural attributes, such as forests, grasslands, wetlands, and riparian or other naturalized open spaces that conserve and enhance ecosystem values and functions. These natural attributes provide ecological goods and services and associated benefits to human populations.

What are Working Landscapes?

Working Landscapes are areas where people and significant economic activities co-exist with natural lands and water. Working Landscapes have a higher immediate risk of loss than areas without significant economic activity. Working Landscapes have generally experienced significant loss of natural areas already and the future risk of loss remains significant.

What are Ecological Goods and Services?

Ecological Goods and Services are the positive conservation benefits that come from healthy ecosystems, including clean water and air and enhanced biodiversity. EG&S include market goods produced from ecosystems (commodities, food and fiber) improved wildlife habitat, benefits from ecosystem processes, including water purification or carbon storage and other values such as improving recreational opportunities. Ecological Goods and Services are sometimes referred to as EG&S.

- Address an evident conservation need that is a priority for The Conservation Trust
- Have significant, measurable, and/or multiple EG&S outcomes (conservation benefits)
- Involve active partnerships and have effective engagement with other organizations
- Have matching funds (cash and in-kind) that meet or exceed a 2:1 ratio i.e. Conservation Trust request is for one-third of the total project costs
- Show how requested funds support priority trust activities

This is the first year of Manitoba's Conservation Trust and it is expected that many more applications will be received than can be initially funded.

Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation

The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation (MHHC) manages the Conservation Trust. MHHC is a non-profit Crown Corporation established through the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Act. Created in 1986, MHHC was formed to work in partnership with Manitoba landowners to maintain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

The Corporation is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors comprised of provincially-appointed representatives. Sixteen fulltime employees, located in five offices throughout southern Manitoba, deliver a range of MHHC's conservation programs.

The mission of The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation is to be a pre-eminent leader in delivering diverse habitat conservation programs through partnerships with the community and other governments.

MHHC seeks innovative solutions to conservation challenges that benefit the landowner, wildlife, and all Manitobans. Over the past 30 years, MHHC has increasingly facilitated conservation partnerships and voluntary, farm-friendly conservation initiatives that promote ecosystem health and biodiversity. MHHC is pleased to build on this experience and host Manitoba's new Conservation Trust. MHHC is not eligible to apply to the Conservation Trust.

What Kind of Work Does the Conservation Trust Fund?

Funding is available for on-the-ground conservation projects across Manitoba's working landscapes that provide Ecological Goods and Services (EG&S). There are five Conservation Trust Categories and applicants are required to apply in the category that most closely aligns with the intent of their project. Projects may be approved for partial or full funding and should be scalable to the resources available. A lead applicant may apply for as many projects as they wish per year across multiple categories, however no lead applicant will be awarded more than \$125,000 per funding cycle.

Conservation Trust Categories

1. **Watersheds** – maximum request of \$125,000 to support

- Activities that support established priorities in an integrated management watershed plan
- Activities that have water quality and quantity (water retention, drought mitigation etc.) as a key EG&S outcome
- Activities that contribute to other EG&S such as biological diversity, soil conservation, carbon sequestration, etc.

Example projects include:

- Wetland restoration and enhancement
- Water retention with a significant habitat enhancement component
- Riparian habitat enhancement
- Forage plantings that have significant watershed benefits. e.g. buffer zones, grassed waterways, forage plantings on fragile croplands

2. **Habitat and Wildlife** – maximum request of \$100,000 to support

- Projects designed to improve habitat quality and quantity
- Enhancement of populations of key wildlife species or suites of species
- Activities to support a regional, provincial, or national plan for wildlife or habitat

Example projects include:

- Block plantings for forests and shelterbelts
- Grass and forage cover plantings
- Native prairie and rangeland enhancement
- Nesting structures
- Habitat manipulations
- Pollinator habitat establishment
- [Fish habitat restoration “above the waterline”](#)
- Crown land habitat restoration that is within agricultural landscapes

3. **Connecting People to Nature** – maximum request of \$50,000 to support

- Activities that enhance people’s connection to nature in urban and high use rural settings

Example projects include:

- Enhancement of riverbanks and natural greenways or equivalent natural areas
- Improving citizens access to nature (e.g. trails) or enhancing a visitor’s experience with nature (e.g. signage)
- Outdoor based interpretive programs specifically designed to connect people with nature

4. Innovation and Conservation Planning – maximum request of \$50,000 and \$25,000 respectively to support

- Innovation: Demonstration projects that focus on new approaches to conservation of land, water and wildlife (maximum request of \$50,000)
- Conservation planning: Large area planning initiatives at an eco-regional, basin, or multi-species scale (maximum request of \$25,000)

Example projects include:

- Pilot projects and/or novel approaches to the conservation and enhancement of EG&S
- Basin-scale water management planning
- Habitat or multi-species planning that occurs at an eco-region or eco-zone scale

5. Enhancing Soil Health – maximum request of \$50,000 to support

- Projects that contribute to soil organic matter, decreased soil erosion or increase carbon sequestration through perennial cover management

Example projects include:

- Perennial cover management primarily to enhance soil health

Conservation Trust Application Requirements

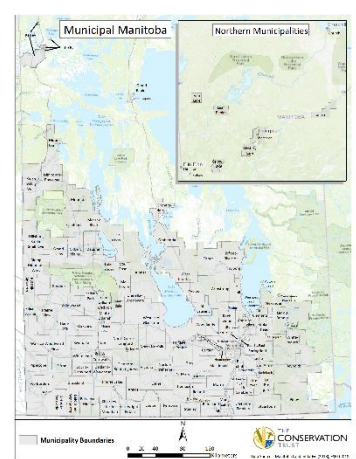
Eligible Areas

- Project sites in [“Municipal Manitoba”](#)

Eligible Lead Applicants

- Community-based not-for-profit groups
- Provincially-based not-for-profit groups
- National not-for-profit groups that have established operations within Manitoba

Click Map to link to an enlarged Map of “Municipal Manitoba”



Lead applicants are encouraged to seek knowledge from various experts in the field and partnerships from other organizations. Organizations are not restricted from partnering multiple times in the same funding cycle.

Ineligible Applicants

- Organizations without established operations in Manitoba
- Governments (including Municipalities and Indigenous governments)
- Individuals
- For-profit organizations

Ineligible applicants are encouraged to participate as project partners with lead applicants. Grant recipients with projects that are not substantially completed (in the same program category) may be restricted from re-applying.

Eligible Expenses

- Salaries & Benefits tied directly to project delivery
- Contractor & Professional Services
- Travel & Field Costs
- Materials & Supplies
- Printing, Production, & Distribution Costs
- Equipment Purchase, Lease, or Rental Costs
- Incentive Payments
- Overhead & Administration*

* the percentage of indirect costs will be a factor in review and ranking of project applications.

Ineligible Expenses

The CT is a project funder and it is not the intent of the fund to provide on-going operating or programming support. The following expenses are ineligible however these may be used as match. Ineligible expenses include, but are not limited to:

- Land purchases
- Major equipment purchases (> \$5000 per item)
- Management Fees
- Major capital assets such as buildings
- Maintenance of existing projects
- Research costs
- Contributions to endowment funds
- Mapping-only projects that are not integral to the development of a larger CT project
- Creation or management of stand-alone electronic databases, websites, or file systems
- Cultural, heritage, or historical activities
- Projects that primarily focus on festivals/tours/events
- Law enforcement activities

- Organizational fundraising
- Fish rearing, farming, stocking, or hatcheries projects
- Feeding or control of wildlife species
- Tenancy agreements/rentals

Ineligible Activities

- Any activity that must be undertaken because of a government order or regulatory requirement (e.g. the restoration of wetlands that are already required by regulation)
- Primary and applied research
- Policy promotion and advocacy activities
- Conferences, lecture series, or conventions
- Rearing or rehabilitating wildlife in captivity
- Ongoing control of alien invasive aquatic or wildlife species

Matching Funds

The overall objective for the Conservation Trust is a total match ratio (cash and in-kind) of 2:1. In other words, for every dollar requested, applicants will have found two dollars' worth of matching funds. Therefore, the funding request should not exceed one-third of the total project cost.

- Matching funds can be cash and/or in-kind goods and services
- Projects with less than a 2:1 match ratio may be considered and ranked accordingly
- No more than 50% of matching funds can be from provincial government sources
- Matching funds for activities that directly relate to the project may have been received up to one year prior to the proposed start date

Examples of cash matching (costs with a financial transaction)

- Project staff time paid for by the lead applicant or project partner
- Goods and services paid for by the lead applicant or project partner
- Donations with a tax receipt

Examples of In-Kind Matching (costs with non-financial transaction, valued at generally accepted market rates)

- Landowner and community time in project planning and implementation
- Community volunteer time
- Goods and services provided for free (e.g. land use where no rent is paid)

If you are unsure if your project is eligible or have questions about match please contact the Conservation Trust Team at 204-784-4354 (Toll free 1-833-323-4636) or CTinfo@mhhc.mb.ca

Project Timelines

Applicants may submit projects for a one or two-year duration.

Partnership

Conservation Trust criteria are designed to encourage broad, effective partnerships. Partners may be involved in the planning and/or project implementation. Projects demonstrating interactive partnerships will be ranked higher in the Partnership Engagement category. For approved projects a signed letter from the partner(s) that clearly outlines the partner roles and responsibilities will be required as part of the contribution agreement.

Application and Review Process

The Conservation Trust Fund uses a two-stage application process and will be completed entirely online:

- Stage 1: Letter of Interest
- Stage 2: Project Application

Stage 1: Open call for Letters of Interest (LOI), using the on-line LOI application. LOIs will be screened to ensure proposed projects meet the Conservation Trust program criteria. Applicants with similar LOI submissions may be asked to collaborate on a single application submission.

The LOI process is intended to screen out organizations and applications that do not meet CT eligibility criteria and limit the number of LOIs proceeding to full applications beyond a 3:1 ratio of fundable projects.

Stage 2: If the LOI is accepted, lead applicants will be invited to apply for project funding using the [Applicant Guide](#) and on-line Application form. Applications will undergo a multi-tier review process:

1. Applications will be screened to determine eligibility and suitability
 2. Applications will be forwarded to a Technical Advisory Committee for technical review, evaluation and ranking. Reviewers have diversified expertise in wildlife, biodiversity, soil and water conservation, and are not associated with organizations eligible for Conservation Trust funding
- Application review criteria include:
- Potential conservation benefit
 - Alignment with CT outcomes
 - Technical Feasibility
 - Deliverables and delivery cost efficiency (cost/benefit)
 - Extent of co-benefits
 - Partnership engagement and matching funds
 - Organizational capacity and delivery history
 - Evidence to support project activities

3. Recommendations from the TAC will be forwarded to Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation.
4. MHHC makes a final determination of successful applications and funding levels, based on TAC rankings, funds available and CT priorities. The decision is final.
5. All applicants will be notified of decisions.

Conservation Trust Fund Application Process Feedback

As this is the first year of granting, the Conservation Trust is seeking input to develop the best process possible. An anonymous online survey regarding the grant application process will be distributed to lead applicants as part of the grant application process.

*For any questions regarding the Conservation Trust please contact
204.784.4354 (Toll free 1.833.323.4636) or CTinfo@mhhc.mb.ca*

Glossary of Terms

CARBON SEQUESTRATION: a process that removes carbon from the atmosphere and stores it in the natural environment.

ECOLOGICAL GOODS AND SERVICES: the positive conservation benefits that come from healthy ecosystems, including clean water and air and enhanced biodiversity. EG&S include market goods produced from ecosystems (commodities, food and fiber), improved wildlife habitat, benefits from ecosystem processes, including water purification or carbon storage and other values such as improving recreational opportunities. Ecological Goods and Services are sometimes referred to as *EG&S*.

FISH HABITAT “ABOVE THE WATERLINE”: riverbank and lake shoreline enhancements that significantly contribute to fish habitat restoration. An example would be establishing bank vegetation to promote bank stability, decrease silt accumulation, reduce the degree to which rocks, boulders, gravel, etc. are embedded in silt and sand (embeddedness) and provide shade, and nutrients and insects for food.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS: all project activities should be measurable, whether quantitatively or qualitatively. Activity measures are referred to as *Measures of Success* or indicators or performance measures. Measures of Success are tracked to determine how well project objectives are being met and relate to outputs.

MUNICIPAL MANITOBA: any municipality that is continued or formed under The Municipal Act (C.C.S.M. c. M225) <https://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/m225e.php>

NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE: a strategically planned and managed network of natural attributes, such as forests, grasslands, wetlands, and riparian or other naturalized open spaces that conserve and enhance ecosystem values and functions. These natural attributes provide ecological goods and services and associated benefits to human populations.

OBJECTIVES: describe the specific, measurable ways a project will address the conservation issue identified. Objectives should be S.M.A.R.T. - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound

OUTPUTS: result from activities that you carry out and are an indication of project effort. Outputs are measurable and can be: activities that you do, people you are trying to reach, products or services you provide. E.g. in a wetland restoration the outputs are the number of acres of restored wetland, the quantity of nutrients sequestered (phosphorus etc.), the amount of carbon sequestered, wildlife benefits etc.

OUTCOMES: are the measurable Ecological Goods & Service benefits you wish to achieve or changes or benefits that result from project activities. Outcomes measure how people and the

environment are impacted by your project. E.g. in the above example of a wetland restoration the outcomes are the volume of water held back in a runoff event.

RIPARIAN ZONES: the transition zones that are found along streams, rivers, lake shores and wetlands. These areas support unique wildlife and plant communities. Healthy riparian areas have many important functions in our watersheds (Manitoba Climate and Green Plan).

WORKING LANDSCAPES: areas where people and significant economic activities co-exist with natural lands and water. Working Landscapes have a higher immediate risk of loss than areas without significant economic activity. Working Landscapes have generally experienced significant loss of natural areas already and the future risk of loss remains significant.