



**Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild & Scenic River Stewardship Council
2023-2024 Community Grants Program
Request for Proposals**

The Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council announces the availability of the 2023-2024 SuAsCo Wild and Scenic River Community Grants to support projects that protect and/or enhance the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers and their outstandingly remarkable values. The grants program aims to engage municipalities and local organizations in protecting the rivers' resources and building strong local stewardship of the rivers in accordance with *The Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild and Scenic River Conservation Plan (River Conservation Plan)*.

Background:

In 1999, 29 miles of the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers were designated as part of the National Wild and Scenic River System based on their *outstandingly remarkable resources*: recreational opportunities, scenery, ecology, history and literature. The River Stewardship Council (RSC) was created to coordinate the protection of these resources. The municipalities of Framingham, Wayland, Sudbury, Lincoln, Concord, Carlisle, Bedford, and Billerica each have a representative on the RSC, as well as Sudbury Valley Trustees, OARS, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service. The RSC, guided by the River Conservation Plan, promotes the protection of these resources through collaborative efforts. For more background, visit www.sudbury-assabet-concord.org and www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/pwsr/.

The intent of this program is to support municipalities, municipal groups, and local organizations, in doing projects that protect the rivers' resources and build strong local stewardship of the rivers. Grant requests ranging from \$500 to \$15,000 will be considered. Approximately \$41,000 will be available for distribution in FY 2024.

Application deadline:

The Community Grant application deadline is October 10, 2023. All proposals will be reviewed at the October 24th, 2022 meeting of the River Stewardship Council. Applicants will be notified shortly after that meeting.

Who May Apply:

Eligible entities include municipalities, municipality-affiliated groups, and nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations from the communities along the Wild and Scenic designated rivers (Framingham, Wayland, Sudbury, Lincoln, Concord, Carlisle, Bedford and Billerica). Eligible entities may include but are not limited to conservation commissions, planning boards, water/wastewater departments, libraries, historical commissions, recreation departments, schools (including environmental clubs, art programs, science classes, etc.), historical societies, garden clubs, art associations, houses of worship, regional organizations, local land trusts, and neighborhood groups. Groups without 501(c)(3) status and individuals interested in applying for funding must partner with an eligible entity.

The RSC will consider applications from groups *outside* the eight Wild and Scenic municipalities (listed above) when the project directly benefits the watershed and resources of the Wild and Scenic Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers. These organizations are encouraged to consult with the RSC before applying to discuss their eligibility.

Previously funded entities may apply in subsequent years with a different project, or one that takes previously funded work to the next level. Performance on a previous grant will be weighed in decision making, as will the applicant’s ability to learn from evaluation efforts. RSC partners receiving other funding through the Wild and Scenic Program can compete for a community grant if the project involves supporting another smaller community entity.

Eligible Projects:

Projects that enhance and/or protect the “outstanding resource values” of recreation, scenery, ecology, history, and/or literature, and/or increase appropriate use and appreciation of these resource values are eligible. Possible project ideas include but are not limited to the following:

- Conservation, restoration, or enhancement of aquatic organisms, wildlife, riverine ecology, water quality and flow, historic, or recreational resources;
- Protection and stewardship of land along the rivers and their tributaries;
- Public education about the river and its resources and values;
- Research studies contributing to increased understanding, and improved management, of the rivers’ outstanding resources;
- Access to, or increased, recreation to encourage people to use and protect the rivers;
- Public art projects that engage the public and promote the river;
- Invasive species management;
- Water conservation education and implementation;
- Protection of natural river flow regimes;
- Projects engaging youth in the arts and sciences of river resources and encouraging an awareness and appreciation of river resources; and
- Efforts to plan and manage for climate resiliency.

Projects mandated as part of a regulatory requirement are not eligible. This may include mitigation for enforcement actions and/or permit requirements. Proposals requesting funds for supplies, such as boats

or monitoring equipment, must include a plan for program implementation and evaluation, and show budget commitment to implementation. For projects that include programming with participant admission fees (i.e. performances, guided hikes, paddles, etc.), some amount of available tickets need to be subsidized and available to the public at low or no cost to the participant.

Project Timeline: Project work can begin as soon as the proposal is accepted and must be completed by October 1, 2024. Funds will be provided on a reimbursement basis only. If project extensions are needed, the RSC must be notified at least 30 days before the project completion deadline.

Application Process:

Interested parties are highly encouraged to contact the RSC Chair Anne Slugg at anne.slugg@gmail.com and Emma Lord, NPS Natural Resource Specialist at emma_lord@nps.gov prior to starting the application process to discuss the appropriateness of the Community Grants for their project. Applications should be no longer than four (4) pages. Additional support materials (maps, photos, etc.) and letters of support and/or commitment are encouraged and do not count toward the four-page maximum. The RSC may need to follow-up with additional questions or requests for clarification, including asking a representative to attend an RSC monthly meeting, before making their funding decision.

All application materials should be emailed to:

emma_lord@nps.gov

Use “SuAsCo W&S Community Grant Proposal 2024 – [Group Name]” in the subject line.

The RSC will evaluate all proposals, and successful applicants will be notified via email of results of the selection process shortly after the October 24, 2023 RSC meeting.

Review Criteria:

The merits of a particular project will then be reviewed according to the following criteria (in no particular order). Projects do not need to meet all of these criteria to be eligible; however, stronger proposals will be those that address many, if not all, of the following:

- Wild and Scenic ORVs/Goals of the *River Conservation Plan*: Does the proposal address the protection, enhancement, or promotion of one or more of the rivers’ outstanding resource values or advance the goals laid out in the *River Conservation Plan*?
- Stewardship: Does the project strengthen relationships among municipalities, non-profit organizations, community groups, and/or the public to enhance local stewardship?
- Thoroughness of Planning: Does the project plan contain enough detail to show all resources required to meet the project timeline? Is the budget reasonable?
- Leveraging of Additional Resources: Are there matching funds or in-kind contributions to the project? These are strongly encouraged but not required.
- Project Outcomes: Has the applicant thoroughly described the anticipated outcomes of the project?

- **Project Evaluation:** Does the applicant have a plan to evaluate the project's effectiveness and impact (relative to the project goals)?
- **Community Support:** Is there demonstrated support for this project from all involved parties?
- **Engagement of Underrepresented Communities:** Does the project engage or benefit Black, indigenous, people of color, people of different abilities, and/or environmental justice populations?
- **Partnerships and Awareness:** Does the project engage partners and/or raise public awareness about the rivers?
- **Experience and Capability:** Does the proposal demonstrate sufficient experience or available expertise needed to complete the project (either from the applicant or through partners or contractors)?
- **Longevity/Sustainability:** Are results of the project sustainable after completion of the grant? Is there a plan for ongoing maintenance or work, if relevant? Will future activities/decisions at the community, municipal, regional, or state level build on the results of the proposed project? How will sufficient funds be raised to continue or maintain the outcome of this project?

The RSC may consider applications from applicants based outside the Wild and Scenic communities, but projects from applicants within the eight Wild and Scenic communities will be given higher priority.

Reports and Products:

Open communication between the grantee and the RSC is encouraged throughout the grant timeline. Grantees may be required to submit an interim report. Grantees will be required to submit a final written report on their projects no later than 30 days after completion.

Final reports must contain the following:

- Brief description of the project, including title, purpose, audience, procedures, & evaluation procedures;
- List of valuable accomplishments & who benefited;
- Funds budgeted and how they were spent; receipts must be submitted;
- Associated products including reports, press releases, photos, etc.

The RSC retains copyright rights and may use any or all materials generated as it sees fit without any additional compensation. Grantees may be requested to speak or present to the full RSC when their project is completed.