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MISSISSIPPI  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION

## STEWARDSHIP FUND PROGRAM

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### ACTION GRANTS

Please see [www.mwmo.org/stewardshipfund.html](http://www.mwmo.org/stewardshipfund.html) for more information.

Water pollution comes from many different sources, including our everyday activities. How we care for our yards and grounds, wash and maintain our cars, and even dispose of pet waste can contribute to water pollution in the Mississippi River. The hard surfaces of our driveways, sidewalks, and pathways increase the amount of stormwater entering the stormdrains. There are many choices we can make to reduce these harmful impacts on water quality. Become a partner organization with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) by applying for a Stewardship Fund grant to work together to improve water quality in the MWMO.

#### Overview

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- Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to complete a significant watershed stewardship project
- Begin by submitting a three-page Letter of Interest
- Applications will be reviewed on an annual basis
- Select applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal
- See the **Action Grants Timeline** on our website for deadlines

An application for an Action Grant should demonstrate that thorough planning for the proposed project has already taken place. It should include a realistic budget for project implementation, secured permissions from landowners for project implementation, design plans, and plant lists (if applicable). If these steps are not already complete, consider applying for a Planning Grant (see **Planning Grant Guidelines** on our website).

#### Program Goals

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Action grants of up to \$50,000 are available for significant watershed stewardship projects completed by community groups. Projects funded through an Action Grant should achieve *both* of the following:

##### 1) Improve water quality or improve water and natural resource management

Projects may reduce pollution (both point and non-point source) entering surface and groundwater, prevent flooding, lessen the effects of drought, increase the capacity of the watershed to store water, and/or restore or maintain habitat and native plant communities.

## 2) **Build community understanding, knowledge, and initiative related to water and natural resource issues and solutions**

Projects should educate and engage people in the watershed regarding watershed issues, resulting in awareness and changed behaviors. Organizations receiving grants will increase their capacity to lead and promote water quality efforts.

### **Geographic Location of Projects**

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Projects should educate and engage people who live, learn, and/or work in or near the MWMO watershed. If physical improvements are planned as part of the project, the improvements must take place within the boundaries of the MWMO watershed (see **MWMO Watershed Map** on our website).

### **Project Examples**

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The following examples are provided simply as general ideas and are not meant to limit the possibilities or creativity of applicants.

- Erosion control practices, planting native plant buffers around water bodies, and ecological restoration (e.g., removal of invasive species and establishment of native species), combined with public education and training of grassroots leaders
- Programs designed to change community attitudes and behavior over the long-term, such as programs that discourage wasting water and using polluting agents such as road salt and lawn chemicals, and encourage use of rainbarrels, rainwater cisterns, and raingardens
- Installation of grit chambers, filtration areas, and other practices to reduce pollution, combined with reporting on the effectiveness of new technologies and approaches
- Replacement of impervious surfaces with high-capacity pervious materials, combined with publicly-accessible demonstrations and high-quality community outreach efforts
- Projects that reach people who are not already engaged in water quality efforts and increase long-term community commitment to working on these issues

### **Eligible Applicants**

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The following groups are eligible to receive a grant:

- Non-profit organizations
- Officially recognized neighborhood groups
- Schools

- Local units of government
- Business associations and professional associations

Individuals, homeowners and condominium associations, and private businesses may partner with eligible applicants in order to apply.

Applications that include improvements on private lands will be considered, but issues such as public access and the environmental benefits of the project will influence decisions.

Action Grants are not intended to provide permanent or on-going funding for projects. Please see Funding for Past Partners in the **Administrative Reference Information** document on our website for more information.

The MWMO is particularly interested in supporting projects that will reach underserved populations (neighborhoods or residents not previously involved in MWMO projects) and projects located in environmentally sensitive areas as defined by the MWMO Watershed Management Plan (see **MWMO Watershed Management Plan** on our website) or the MWMO Board.

## **Available Funds and Selection Process**

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\$150,000 is available for Action Grants annually. Letters of Interest will be reviewed by MWMO staff and the MWMO Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). Once the letters are reviewed, some applicants will then be asked to submit a full proposal to be considered for funding (see **Action Grants: How to Complete a Full Proposal** on our website).

Full proposals will be reviewed by MWMO staff and the CAC, and their recommendations for funding must be approved by the MWMO Board. The following criteria will be used to select projects for funding:

- 30% Project purpose is clear and well aligned with Stewardship Fund program goals
- 45% Project activities are clearly stated and will lead to successful outcomes
- 15% Project timeline and budget are reasonable and cost effective (Projects with a cash or in-kind match will be given greater consideration)
- 10% Overall proposal quality, including completeness, clarity, and key project personnel

## **Timeline**

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See the **Action Grants Timeline** on our website for an up-to-date timeline of the Action Grant program.

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## How to Apply for an Action Grant: Letter of Interest

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Submit a Letter of Interest on your organization or school letterhead, if possible. Please use a font size of at least 12-point and use at least one-inch margins. The letter should be no more than three pages. In addition to the Letter of Interest, submit a completed **Stewardship Fund Budget Form** (available for download on our website or contact Erica Sniegowski at (612) 465-8780, ext. 206, for a hard copy). If you have pertinent drawings, designs, or photographs of the project site, no more than two additional pages of these types of materials may be submitted. Any materials exceeding the page limits will not be reviewed. Please submit the following:

1. Briefly describe the applicant organization (and any partners, if applicable.)
2. List the staff responsible for the project, including a key contact person. Please include phone numbers, email, and a short description of qualifications for the key staff person.
3. Describe the project you would like to complete. Include:
  - ✓ who (who is involved, who is affected, and who is leading it)
  - ✓ what (what activities will take place)
  - ✓ where (list the specific geographic areas involved), and
  - ✓ when (provide a brief timeline)
4. How will the project achieve the two goals of the Action Grant program? In discussing Goal 1, please quantify the benefit for water quality and describe how the project is appropriate in size and scale for the selected area. *Examples: How much impervious (hard) surface will be replaced by pervious materials (e.g., raingarden, pervious pavers)? How much impervious surface will drain to the project site (e.g., square footage of roof top, driveway, alley, or parking lot)? How many properties will be affected? How many raingardens or rainbarrels will be installed?*
5. Why is this project of interest to your organization?
6. If you have received funds from the MWMO in the past, describe how this project complements and extends your past projects.
7. How much funding do you expect to request (up to \$50,000), and how will the funding be used? Provide reviewers detail about how you arrived at your cost estimates. Complete a **Stewardship Fund Budget Form** (available for download on our website or contact Erica Sniegowski at (612) 465-8780, ext. 206, for a hard copy) with as much detail as possible. Eligible Project Expenses may be reviewed in the **Administrative Reference Information** document on our website.
8. How did you learn about the Stewardship Fund Program (*e.g., email announcement, list serv, newspaper, or past Stewardship Fund grant recipient*)?

Email your Letter of Interest to Erica Sniegowski at [esniegowski@mwm.org](mailto:esniegowski@mwm.org) by the deadline (see **Action Grants Timeline** on our website). You will receive an email confirmation that your Letter of Interest was received. If you do not receive a confirmation, please call (612) 465-8780, ext. 206. If you are unable to send your Letter of Interest by email, you may mail or submit it in person to:

Erica Sniegowski  
Mississippi Watershed Management Organization  
1224 Marshall Street NE, Suite 201  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55413

## **Administrative Reference Information**

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Before submitting your letter of interest, please review the following essential information in the **Administrative Reference Information** document on our website:

- Eligible Project Expenses
- Meetings
- Project Evaluation and Reporting
- Other Expectations
- Contracting and Disbursement of Funds
- Funding for Past Partners
- Insurance Requirements

## **For Help or More Information**

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Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Erica Sniegowski, Education & Outreach Specialist, to discuss ideas and ask questions in advance of submitting a Letter of Interest. Erica can help you determine, for example, if you should first apply for a Planning Grant before applying for an Action Grant. Erica can be reached at [esniegowski@mwm.org](mailto:esniegowski@mwm.org) or (612) 465-8780, ext. 206.