

**Region of Waterloo**  
**Planning, Development, and Legislative Services**  
**Community Planning**

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**To:** Planning and Works Committee  
**Meeting Date:** June 6, 2023  
**Report Title:** 2023 Community Environmental Fund Grants

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**1. Recommendation**

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve funding allocations totalling up to \$99,995.00 from the Community Environmental Fund to support 20 stewardship and sustainability projects as described in Report PDL-CPL-23-015, dated June 6, 2023.

**2. Purpose / Issue:**

To seek Council approval of the projects to be funded in 2023 by the Community Environmental Fund, in alignment with the Region's discretionary grant policy and processes, outlined in report COR-ADM-23-002, dated March 7, 2023.

**3. Strategic Plan:**

This report addresses the Region's Corporate Strategic Plan 2019-2023 Focus Area 3: Environment and Climate Action, as well as Strategic Objectives 3.1 Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, 3.2 Improve resilience to climate change and/or severe weather, 3.3 Direct more waste away from the landfill, improve recycling and better manage organic waste, and 3.5 Promote the efficient use of urban land, and protect and enhance agricultural and natural areas.

**4. Report Highlights:**

- The Community Environmental Fund (CEF) was established by Regional Council in October 2011 (Report CR-FM-11-022/P-11-085). Since its inception, the Community Environmental Fund has granted nearly \$2 million to over 250 projects.
- The Region's approved 2023 budget for Planning, Development and Legislative Services included \$100,000 for the Community Environmental Fund funded from the property tax levy.
- Stewardship and sustainability projects funded by the CEF are required to provide a positive and lasting environmental return, engage citizens and

encourage collaboration, seek innovative solutions and/or increase knowledge, and produce measurable and achievable outcomes.

- Twenty-eight applications were received in 2023 and included projects to: reduce the spread of invasive vegetation in natural areas; develop pollinator-planting areas; initiate or improve Community Gardens; produce a series of videos documenting the Region's Climate Action Strategy; and conduct research into Stormwater Management Ponds and local lakes. Twenty of the projects are recommended for funding in 2023 for a total of \$99,995.00.
- Recommended funding amounts were determined in consultation with applicants and were based on the following criteria: alignment of the project with the purpose of the fund; level of public impact and access; and specific funding needs based on project design and the availability of in-kind and other funding supports.
- In instances where the full amount requested is not awarded, staff have contacted applicants to ensure that the recommended level of funding will be sufficient to contribute to the successful completion of the project.
- The recommended Regional grants would leverage an estimated \$4.47 for every \$1.00 spent from the applicants and/or other sources of funding.
- The recommended projects are situated across the Region including rural communities and settlement areas.
- Applications for which grants are not recommended at this time were deemed either premature, not fulfilling sufficient eligibility criteria or falling outside the scope of eligible funding. Staff plan to offer assistance to community members who submitted applications that were not funded who may wish to re-apply in the future.

## **5. Background:**

The Community Environmental Fund was advertised in the winter of 2023 to attract proposal submissions. Twenty-eight proposals were received from a wide variety of local applicants for a total request of nearly \$285,000. Staff reviewed applications to ensure that they conformed to the funding guidelines, evaluated the proposals based on the program funding criteria, and where necessary, followed up with applicants to further clarify details of their proposals and refine specific funding needs.

The projects recommended for funding are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Recommended funding for CEF applicants

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Full Cost of Project</b>	<b>Recommended Funding</b>
Dog Strangling Vine (DSV) Response (GRCA)	\$11,640	\$5,000
Restoring Riparian Biodiversity Along Laurel Creek (UW)	\$14,329	\$5,000
Pollinator Roadsides - Plantings for Bees, Butterflies and Beautification (Waterloo Region Nature)	\$6,909	\$2,500
Grebel Student Pollinator Garden (Conrad Grebel University College)	\$8,790	\$2,500
Continuing restoration by residents of a piece of land at Luther Village	\$17,590	\$6,000
S.E.W. Pollinator Pathway 2023 Challenge – (Mill Courtland Neighbourhood Association)	\$6,090	\$400
Paradise Lake Water Quality Monitoring, Implementation and Education	\$20,034	\$8,750
Let's Tree Wilmot in Baden	\$12,278	\$6,000
Petersburg Community Garden (Waterloo Region Community Garden Network)	\$31,005	\$8,000
S.E.W. Pollinator Pathway 2023 Challenge – (École élémentaire L'Harmonie)	\$3,000	\$245
Growing Together Community Garden- Kingsdale	\$25,890	\$8,650
SLO-Speed: Shoreland Outpost on the Speed River	\$28,510	\$4,500
Bring Back the Maples- Woolwich Roadside Tree restoration (Trees For Woolwich)	\$105,560	\$5,000
Wilmot Township Tree Canopy Study / Policy	\$50,310	\$8,500
S.E.W. Pollinator Pathway 2023 Challenge – (Janet Metcalfe Public School)	\$3,000	\$200
Naturalization of Landscape (Waterloo Condominium Corporation No. 202)	\$6,000	\$2,500
Video storytelling on the TransformWR Climate Action Strategy (The People's Climate Foundation)	\$24,000	\$10,000
DEAR: Developing Environmental Advocates and Researchers (Waterloo-Wellington Science and Engineering Fair)	\$2,500	\$1,250
Trinity Village Community Garden Permeable Pathway Project	\$64,484	\$10,000
Characterising submerged aquatic vegetation in Stormwater Ponds in Kitchener Waterloo (Biology	\$5,500	\$5,000

Dept. - WLU)		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$447,419</b>
		<b>\$99,995</b>

To be eligible for consideration, a project proposal to the Community Environmental Fund, must be implemented within the Waterloo Region and satisfy a series of evaluation criteria. Requests for funding typically range from \$1,000 to \$20,000 per project.

Grant applications are accepted from the following candidates: charitable or non-profit organizations (clubs, associations, land trusts); neighbourhood associations and other unincorporated community-based groups; co-operative corporations; public institutions; and individuals/students with a documented collaborative agreement with an eligible applicant. Stewardship applications are also accepted from private landowners, Area Municipalities, the Grand River Conservation Authority and Regional departments

## **6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public**

### **Area Municipalities:**

Area Municipalities are eligible recipients for project funding.

### **Public:**

A wide range of community members are invited to apply, including: charitable or non-profit organizations; neighbourhoods associations and other unincorporated community-based groups; co-operative corporations; schools, school boards, universities, colleges, hospitals, library or other public institutions; and individuals/students with a documented collaborative agreement with an eligible applicant.

## **7. Financial Implications:**

The Region's approved 2023 budget for Planning, Development and Legislative Services included \$100,000 for the Community Environmental Fund funded from the property tax levy. Staff are recommending that the Region approve funding of \$99,995.00 for 20 projects.

## **8. Conclusion / Next Steps:**

Following Council's consideration of this report, Community Environmental Fund applicants will receive official notice of their funding allocation, as well as further information on the process to receive the funds, including administrative and reporting requirements. Staff will continue to pursue partnership opportunities that can enhance local funding for stewardship and sustainability projects through grants to community organizations.

**9. Attachments:**

Appendix A: Community Environmental Fund 2023 project summaries and funding allocation recommendations.

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