

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

To: Administration and Finance Committee
Meeting Date: June 4, 2024
Report Title: 2024 Community Environmental Fund Grants

1. Recommendation

That the Regional Municipality of Waterloo approve funding allocations totalling up to \$90,000 from the Community Environmental Fund to support 16 stewardship and sustainability projects as described in Report PDL-CPL-24-011, dated June 4, 2024.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To seek Council approval of the projects to be funded in 2024 by the Community Environmental Fund.

3. Strategic Plan:

The Community Environmental Grant program addresses the Climate Aligned Growth Key Area of the Region's Corporate Strategic Plan 2023-2027 as many of the projects funded through this grant directly support the Region's aim of stewarding our natural environment and shared resources as we grow.

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.
- 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.
- Seventeen applications were received in 2024 and included projects to: restore wetland habitat; develop pollinator-planting areas; engage youth in native landscaping projects; enhance bird and bat nesting habitat; support the development of environmental advocates and researchers at the high school

level; and to initiate or improve Community Gardens. Sixteen of the projects are recommended for funding in 2024 for a total of \$90,000.

- 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.
- If approved, estimates indicate that for every \$1 of CEF funding, the recommended grants would leverage an additional \$4 when considering other donations, in-kind contributions, and/or other sources of funding.
- The recommended projects are situated across the Region including rural communities, settlement areas, and urban areas.
- The application for which a grant is not recommended, fell outside the scope of eligible funding. Staff has explored other opportunities for funding with the applicant.

5. Background:

The Community Environmental Fund was advertised in the winter of 2024 to attract proposal submissions. Seventeen proposals were received from a wide variety of local applicants for a total request of approximately \$145,000. 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 along with the recommended amounts.

Table 1: Projects recommended for funding as part of the 2024 Community Environmental Fund (CEF)

Project Title	Total Cost of Project	CEF Funding Request	Recommended CEF Funding
Branchton Forest Management Project	\$4,340	\$4,340	\$4,000
KW Habilitation Community Garden/Fruit Tree Initiative	\$4,616	\$4,117	\$3,500
Barrie's Lake Wetland Restoration and Stewardship Project	\$18,090	\$8,590	\$7,000
Luther Village Path Restoration	\$6,760	\$5,085	\$5,000

RARE Bioblitz Project	\$26,300	\$4,650	\$4,500
Trees For Woolwich - Plantings	\$146,160	\$15,000	\$10,000
UW Bird and Bat Nesting Habitat Enhancements	\$7,947	\$7,042	\$5,000
SustainableWR Tool for Staff Engagement	\$18,000	\$13,000	\$8,000
oneROOF Youth Services Landscaping Project	\$15,000	\$8,456	\$6,200
FWR Dickson - Tall Grass Prairie Enhancement	\$20,535	\$15,000	\$6,000
Mill Courtland - Nature In Motion Workshop Series	\$13,150	\$12,350	\$5,000
All Our Relations - Biodiversity Project	\$23,368	\$9,768	\$5,000
Petersburg Community Garden Support	\$10,375	\$7,781	\$6,000
WWSEF Festival - Developing Environmental Advocates and Researchers	\$1,600	\$800	\$800
WCRI - Landscape Plantings	\$5,381	\$4,500	\$4,000
SWRIL - Nurture School Gardens/Food Forests	\$19,448	\$14,922	\$10,000
TOTAL	\$341,070	\$135,401	\$90,000

To be eligible for consideration, a project proposal to the Community Environmental Fund must be implemented within 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: 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.

7. Financial Implications:

The Region's approved 2024 budget for Planning, Development and Legislative Services included \$90,000 for the Community Environmental Fund funded from the

property tax levy. Staff are recommending that the Region approve funding of \$90,000 for 16 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. 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 2024 project summaries and funding allocation recommendations.

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