



Community Watershed Restoration Grant

Guidelines & Criteria



2026

How to Submit Your Application

Email

Please submit your application by email to parksandarecreation@nanaimo.ca by 4:00p.m. on March 9, 2026.

In-Person

Please submit your application at the Bowen Complex Dropbox, by 4:00p.m. on March 9, 2026. The dropbox is accessible from outside and is located on the lower level of the building (Pine Street Entrance). Please make sure your package is clearly marked with the applicable grant name.

By Mail

c/o , City of Nanaimo 455 Wallace Street, Nanaimo BC V9R 5J6

A confirmation email will be sent to all applicants using the email address indicated in your application form to confirm that we have received your submission.

Important Notes

Late Applications

Please note that late applications will not be reviewed.

Information Session

Applicants should plan to attend an online information session on February 10, 2026, at 5:00p.m. Please contact sustainability@nanaimo.ca to RSVP.



The Millstone River flowing through Bowen Park.



Main trailhead at Diver Lake Park.

Introduction

City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined (adopted in 2022) is the City's strategic planning document. City Plan provides direction for the coming 25 years on land use, Truth and Reconciliation, climate adaptation, health and wellness, diversity, accessibility and inclusion, economic prosperity, sustainable living, and more. Because cities work best when interdependent systems are considered together, *City Plan: Nanaimo Reimagined* integrates several interdependent documents and goal areas.

The City Plan recognizes the vital role of natural assets and green and blue spaces in the community. Urban tree canopies, natural areas, and greenways are a fundamental part of the city's infrastructure and provide many benefits. They provide wildlife habitat; ecological services, including stormwater management and air and water quality improvements; reduction of urban heat island effects and climate resiliency; human health and safety; and community livability.



Linley Valley Park and the Cottle Creek watershed.

The City now manages over 1,000 hectares of parkland, of which more than 70% is natural area with significant tree canopy and lands along watercourses. Expanding and maintaining a connected urban tree canopy, natural areas, and greenway network is essential to our ongoing pride, identify community health, and wellbeing.

On December 14, 2020, Council allocated funds to support a Community Watershed Restoration Grant Program to fund eligible projects that strive to improve the environment and ecosystems of Nanaimo. In 2026, a total of \$20,000 in funding is available. Individual applications for up to \$20,000 in funding will be accepted; however, funding of less than \$20,000 may also be split between more than one successful applicant.

Purpose

The purpose of the Community Watershed Restoration Grant is to assist property owners and organizations in supporting the City of Nanaimo's City Plan goals and environmental responsibility objectives by providing annual funding to support community restoration projects.

Strategic Priorities

The City's strategic funding priorities for the Community Watershed Restoration Grant should be aligned with the Green Goals as identified in City Plan and its [Integrated Action Plan](#) projects and programs.

The green goals identified in City Plan include:

- Watershed Protection (e.g. projects that protect/enhance or restore the riparian environments), sustainably managed stormwater (including daylighting piped systems), recognize the natural capital value of a wetland, river or other watercourses, and/or improve the water quality and fish habitats in City rivers, lakes, and wetlands.
- Urban Tree Canopy, Natural Areas, and Greenways (e.g. projects that protect and/or enhance the City's natural environment including the urban tree canopy, marine foreshore, environmentally sensitive areas, nature parks, and green corridors).
- Climate Adaptation (e.g. projects that support people, the environment, buildings, and/or infrastructure adapting to the impacts of climate change).

Due to the integrated nature of natural assets, in addition to the green goals stated above, projects may also demonstrate connections to other City Plan goals such as active and healthy communities, empowerment and reconciliation. All projects should also support the “Environmental Responsibility” theme within City Plan, including projects that “will protect and enhance Nanaimo’s natural environment by looking after the community’s biological diversity and adapt the way we live, work, recreate, and move.”



View across East Wellington Park.



Forest understory at Woodstream Park.

Eligible Organizations

Funding will be available annually to community organizations, environmental non-profits, and individual residents to provide financial support for community watershed restoration project and related eligible activities.

Organizations and individuals applying for funding must be based in Nanaimo and/or be proposing a project that primarily serves Nanaimo residents. Eligible applicants include:

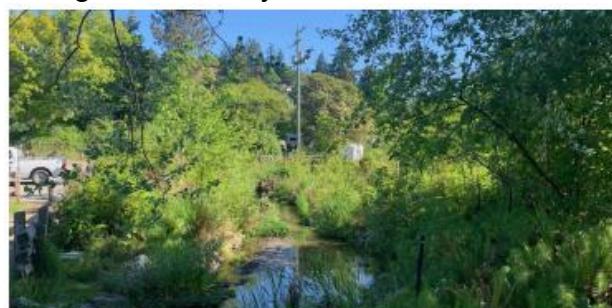


View of wetland and Richards Marsh Park.

- **Individual property owners** (proof of ownership required) who own property that includes or is adjacent to a watercourse or other environmentally sensitive area where they wish to do environmental restoration or enhancement work that is not required as a condition of a development approval;
- A **non-profit society** incorporated under the BC Provincial Societies Act or federally designated as a registered charity;
- A **recognized religious group** with ongoing activities and a congregation; and,
- A **neighborhood association** recognized by the City of Nanaimo.

Ineligible groups include:

- Groups, organizations, or individuals with outstanding balances owed to the City of Nanaimo.
- Groups, organizations, or individuals that are subject to active enforcement with the City of Nanaimo or not in good standing with the City of Nanaimo, Federal, or Provincial Governments.
- Organizations or individuals may not be eligible for Community Environment Grant funding if they have received other funding assistance through the City of Nanaimo within the same grant year period.



Daylighted section of Departure Creek at Departure Bay Centennial Park.

Eligible Activities

Grant funding may be used to support the following project expenses:

- Project planning and design studies completed by a qualified professional including but not limited environmental assessments, restoration plans, site plan or surveys, landscape plans, slope/erosion stabilization study, and/or an archeological assessment.
- Plant and landscape material purchase and installation.
- Disposal costs (e.g. bins to store and dispose of invasive material, waste removal, landfill fees).
- Construction equipment rental and labor costs.

Funds from the Community Watershed Restoration Grant may not be used for the following purposes:

- Ongoing operational expenses incurred during the normal course of business;
- Projects occurring outside the City of Nanaimo;
- Projects that would not be in compliance with Federal and/or Provincial law or City of Nanaimo Bylaws;
- Payment of pre-existing debts;
- Proposed development projects that require environmental restoration as a condition of development approval; and/or,
- Bursaries and scholarships.



Restoration and native plantings along the Catstream.



Forested banks along the Catsream River.

Project Criteria

Where the proposed project is on land not owned by the applicant, landowner permission is required. This includes property owned by the City of Nanaimo and other levels of government. All proposed expenses must be used to support a proposed community environmental restoration project.

Assessment Criteria

30% Merit

- What is the overall quality of the proposal?
- Is the project aligned with the applicant organization's mandate and/or individual stewardship goals?
- Is there any community support and partnership with other organizations, including First Nations?
- Has the applicant shown a commitment and history of environmental restoration and/or land stewardship?

40% Relevance & Feasibility

- Does the project reflect the City's identified strategic priorities or objectives/programs and projects as identified within City Plan and its integrated action plan?
- Is the project supported by the City's Environmental Responsibility theme with the City's Strategic Plan?
- Does the project potentially impact Snuneymuxw First Nation interests? If so, would it be supported by Snuneymuxw?
- What is the capacity and demonstrated ability of the applicant?
- Does the applicant have the budget and capacity to carry out the project? Have the applicants' partners and/or consultants been identified?
- Has the applicant leveraged other funding sources available?

30% Potential Impact

- What area will be impacted? How great is the impact? Is the anticipated impact measurable?
- How critical is the issue being addressed?
- Is the project advancing actions and capital projects identified in Nanaimo's Integrated Action Plan or ongoing work/initiatives through the City of Nanaimo Parks Recreation and Culture Department and/or partners?

Adjudication Process

Applications will be received by the City of Nanaimo and reviewed by a cross section of Staff from a number of relevant departments. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Finance & Audit Committee and then to Nanaimo's City Council for approval. Once disbursed, funding must be spent within the next twelve (12) months and a report (including copies of studies and reports funded by the grant) and/or videos or photos must be provided at project completion or at the end of the twelve-month period, whichever comes first. If the applicant chooses to submit an application for the following year, a report regarding the previous project-funding grant must be received prior to the submission of the new grant.

Appeal

If there was an error in the assessment process (for example, that support material was misplaced), applicants may file a formal complaint, in writing, within 10 calendar days of notification of results. All appeals will be reviewed by an appeals committee.



Volunteers hard at work along Walley Creek and Morningside Park.

Previous Successful Projects

Previous projects receiving funding through this grant include:

- Wetland restoration and Habitat Creation (Pacific Garden Cohousing);
- Restoration of the Cat Stream between 5th and 7th Street (South end Eco Development);
- Diver Lake storm water contamination study (Wellington Action Committee);
- Northfield Marsh Restoration (Nanaimo Area Land trust and syuwéñct Elementary School); and,
- Walley Creek Bank Stabilization (Walley Creek Streamkeepers).



Volunteers removing invasive plants in Bowen Park.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Terms & Conditions of Funding</h2>	
General Terms and Conditions	<p>The awarding of a grant is at the sole and absolute discretion of the City of Nanaimo. The City of Nanaimo retains the right to rescind or reduce any grant previously awarded. The circumstances for rescinding a grant include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • failure to meet the terms and conditions of the grant; • failure to comply with legal obligations ; • failure to respect the commitment to provide a workplace free from harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct; • unapproved changes to funded activities; and/or, • significant risk of insolvency or bankruptcy.
Project Kick-off Meeting	<p>Prior to receiving grant funding the grant recipient is required to contact the City to arrange a project kickoff meeting. Funding will not be disbursed until after the kick off meeting. The purpose of the kickoff meeting is to ensure a shared understanding of the project scope, goals, and limitations between the recipient and the City and ensure the recipient is aware of all City requirements and permissions.</p>
Final Reports and Submissions	<p>Grant recipients must use the Grant Report Form to complete and submit their final report by the due date specified in the results letter. Final reports must detail any substantial changes to your original proposal and must include an accounting of spent and unspent funds. Failure to provide a final report will result in the rejection of all new funding applications. Videos and photos are also desired as part of the final report submission to further raise awareness about the grant and the works carried out within the community.</p>

Grant Repayment	If for any reason you cannot use the grant at the expected time, decide not to carry out the plans described in your grant application or refuse the grant conditions, you must notify us immediately. If you are unable to complete your project or event any unspent funds must be returned to the City of Nanaimo. Unused grant funds will not be carried over to the next calendar year without written permission from the City of Nanaimo. If you do not use the entire grant amount, any unused portion belongs to the City of Nanaimo.
Payment	The City of Nanaimo can deliver awarded funds by cheque or direct deposit. To receive funds via electronic funds transfer (EFT), recipient must fill out and return the EFT form, along with VOID cheque or verified account information printout from banking institution.
Statement of Inclusivity	<p>Recipients of City of the Grant funding must demonstrate commitment to City of Nanaimo Policy C4.2 Equity and Inclusivity:</p> <p><i>“Equity recognizes that each person has different circumstances and allocates resources and opportunities to support more positive outcomes for all regardless of age, ability, gender, sexual orientation, faith practice, ancestry, or background. By identifying inequities and targeting investment in prevention and intervention, the wellbeing and inclusion of the diversity of people that make up our entire community can be enhanced, creating a city that puts people first and supports a sense of belonging.”</i></p> <p>Funding is provided with the expectation that recipients will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a welcoming, inclusive atmosphere where all people feel safe, comfortable and represented (Policy C4.2.1). • Encourage diversity awareness and build a culture of compassion for people of all cultures, genders, orientations, ages and abilities (Policy C4.2.8).

Changes to Activities	Changes to the scope of your original proposal must be approved by the City of Nanaimo. You must notify the City of Nanaimo immediately if you cannot use part or the entire grant during the period stated in your application or if there are changes to your proposed activities.
Acknowledgement of the City of Nanaimo and Logo Use	Public acknowledgement of support is required for all grant recipients. Please ensure that all materials (including copies of reports, advertising, oral presentations and publicity relating to the project(s) or programming credit the support of the grant. Please ensure proper logo use when crediting the City of Nanaimo's support. You can request logo files by contacting parksandrecreation@nanaimo.ca .
Permits, Fees, Applications	The approval of this grant does not indicate approval of associated required permits for public events or activities in public space that is not identified in the application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all necessary permits and permission have been obtained prior to commencing project and or event and ensure compliance with all required permits.
Confidentiality	Documents submitted by applicants become property of the City of Nanaimo. The City will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of each application and the information contained therein except to the extent necessary to communicate information to Staff and the committee for the purpose of evaluation and analysis. The City will not release this information to the public except required under the Province of BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act or other legal disclosure process. Project information, including event pictures may be shared on the City's website and social media.
Tax Implications (if applicable)	Non-profit societies, in good standing, can receive payment in the society name.