Grant Announcement – Culvert/Bridge Replacement Incentive Program

Grant Description and Purpose

The DNR continues to make funding available from the Clean Water Legacy Fund in the form of cost-share grants to local units of government to replace culverts at stream-road crossings to address channel erosion, ecological connectivity (e.g., fish passage), and floodplain connectivity issues. Funding is intended to offset additional costs associated with adopting higher design standards based on a geomorphic design approach.

Eligible Expenses

The grant will partially fund eligible construction costs related to the replacement of culverts and/or bridges in accordance with a tiered funding structure (see Section 5, *Grant Award*). Costs related to the design and planning aspect of the project are not eligible. However, DNR staff may provide technical assistance, including geomorphic surveys, hydrology & hydraulic modeling and design consultation.

Requirements

- Projects must address impairments, channel stability, and fish passage
- Projects design will be developed collaboratively with DNR
- Projects will incorporate the Geomorphic Approach (e.g. design for natural channel and floodplain)

Timeline

The DNR will use a continuous rolling application, making awards until available funds are spent.

Process

1) Submit Grant Application

Interested applicants should complete and submit the "application for cost-share grant".

2) Review

Grant applications and Preliminary River Assessment will be reviewed for completeness. Eligible projects with complete applications will be added to a project list. The list will be prioritized based on a scoring of anticipated benefits. DNR staff may contact applicants to compile additional site information to perform a screening-level assessment of channel erosion, ecological connectivity, and floodplain connectivity. DNR can provide assistance as needed. Criteria considered in proposal rating will include:

- Project located on a stream listed on the Minnesota impaired waters list for sediment or biological impairment.
- Project is likely to provide ecological benefits including:
    - Channel stabilization
    - Improved ecological connectivity (e.g., fish passage)
    - Improved floodplain connectivity

- Scale of the potential benefits (e.g., length of stream, multiple consecutive sites, integration with restoration)
- Project addresses an issue in an underserved community
- The DNR may also consider the need to balance geographic representation of projects

The DNR will work from the project priority list until all available funding has been obligated.

3) Tentative Grant Award

Projects with a passing score will receive a tentative grant award notification. Award agreements will be formalized after receipt of final design, application and cost estimate.

4) Preliminary Design & Cost Estimate

DNR staff will work with the tentative grant recipient to develop a mutually agreed preliminary design (e.g. 60% design) and estimated project cost. DNR staff must review and approve the 60% design to ensure the ecological benefits are achieved.

5) Grant Award

Grant agreements will be executed between the DNR and the recipient after final design approval and completion of a detailed engineering cost estimate. Grant awards are subsequently provided on a reimbursement basis for eligible construction costs, in accordance with the tiered funding structure outlined below:

- Tier 1: For projects with total eligible construction costs under $25,000, the grant will reimburse up to 100 percent of eligible costs.
- Tier 2: For projects with total eligible construction costs between $25,000 and $100,000, the grant award will be limited to a maximum reimbursement of $25,000.
- Tier 3: For projects with total eligible construction costs between $100,000 and $800,000, the grant will reimburse up to 25 percent of eligible costs.
- Tier 4: For projects with total eligible construction costs exceeding $800,000, the grant award is capped at a maximum reimbursement of $200,000.

A tiered funding structure based on project cost provides a cost-effective way to maximize both the number and distribution of high impact projects across the state. This approach is intended to expand access to funding for under-served local government units and to ensure that available funds are distributed across a diverse range of roadway types and geographic areas. Maximum reimbursement caps are applied to prevent the concentration of funds in a limited number of large projects and broaden program participation.

6) Final Design

The tentative grant recipient (or their engineer) is responsible for the final design, permitting and construction. The grant recipient is responsible for acquiring all necessary permits and for overseeing construction efforts. DNR staff are available for consultation for these project phases.

7) Post Construction

The grant recipient will provide a reimbursement request including all required financial information and a copy of the as-built drawings of the completed project.