



Tennessee Healthy Watershed Initiative

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND PROJECT APPLICATION PACKAGE

PROPOSAL DEADLINE

*Proposals must be received by
November 18, 2016*

All applications must be submitted electronically to
Rob Bullard at:

ebullard@tnc.org

For more information:

<http://www.tn.gov/environment/article/wr-ws-tennessee-healthy-watershed-initiative>

Request for Proposals

Background of the Tennessee Healthy Watershed Initiative (THWI)

With more than 60,000 miles of rivers and streams and more than 500,000 acres of lakes, Tennessee's waters provide recreational enjoyment and water supply to millions of people, and habitat for the most biodiverse freshwater aquatic species in the United States. In addition, they provide the irrigation needs of agriculture as well as meeting the needs of industry. Increasingly, responding to water use demands requires collaboration and thoughtful planning among a broad partnership of agencies and interests in order to assure that our waters continue to fully meet the many needs placed upon them.

The Tennessee Healthy Watershed Initiative (THWI) began as a collaboration of federal, state and nonprofit organizations committed to maintaining and improving water resources in Tennessee watersheds. The THWI was launched in 2011 under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) executed by The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), The Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and West Tennessee River Basin Authority (WTRBA). The MOU signatories recognized that many groups, both governmental and non-governmental, all have an interest in and a role in the health of Tennessee watersheds. This initiative provided a structure to bring those interested parties together.

Today, under the leadership of TDEC, the THWI continues to be a strong collaboration of those founding THWI partners. We are utilizing this initiative to continue to provide a forum for communication, collaboration, and thoughtful planning among a broad partnership of agencies and interests. We continue to coordinate implementation of protection and improvement efforts for Tennessee's water resources.

The overall goals of Tennessee Healthy Watershed Initiative are:

1. To establish and nurture partnerships that lead to the implementation of critical projects to protect and improve the state of watersheds in Tennessee;
2. To continue to work together to prevent watersheds from becoming impaired and to accelerate restoration of impaired streams;
3. To encourage the exchange of information, coordination, and planning among agencies, citizens, and communities to achieve healthy watersheds;
4. To encourage and assist with the application of good science to comprehensive and collaborative strategies for healthy watershed planning; and
5. To focus stakeholder programs and resources toward collaborative initiatives, promoting better decisions on spending available resources, and increasing the opportunity to protect and improve multiple resources and watersheds.

Strategic Investment Areas

The MOU outlined strategic investment areas for the THWI. These strategic investment areas will continue to guide selection of projects under this RFP with some additional guidelines being added as follows. The 8 original investment areas are:

1. Regional Water Planning - Example: Develop long-range comprehensive plans to address water quality and supply issues focusing on watershed management units and service areas of water utilities. Plans will be in accordance to the Water Resources Technical Advisory Committee's (WRTAC) guidance. For more information, see the following:
http://www.tn.gov/environment/water/water_regional_planning.shtml
2. Restoration Projects -Example: Work in partnership to target and implement water resource protection/improvement projects that have the highest likelihood of success with measurable results.
3. Scientific Research and Monitoring -Example: Monitor stream conditions and conduct research to gain information needed to help communities, agencies, and industries to make better management decisions and take better care of the state's water resources.
4. Economic Development - Example: Work with key economic development partners to leverage resource and ensure future development has minimal impact on water resources.
5. Education & Empowerment - Example: Provide watershed/water resource tools and outreach material to local citizens and partners to ensure sustainability and to proactively prevent future problems by creating public awareness of practices affecting good water quality in the region.
6. Identification and Exportation of Best Practices -Example: Identify and export best management practices that are most effective and efficient in reducing pollution loads.
7. Protection of Waters and Wetlands - Example: Work with partners to target healthy waters and critical wetlands, develop action plans, and implement protection initiatives.
8. Funding - Explore ways to focus existing funding and identify/develop new sources of funding for water resource protection and improvement.

While these areas will still be used, the THWI will focus the majority of available funding for the 2016 funding cycle on Restoration Projects and Protection of Waters and Wetlands that are identified in in the Tennessee Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health as described herein. Please ensure that your proposed project is relevant to the THWI and aligns with these priorities.

Tennessee Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health

From 2014 to 2016, the THWI partnered with the EPA in the development of the Tennessee Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health (the Assessment). The Assessment identified healthy watersheds and characterized relative watershed health across Tennessee. The Assessment now serves as an important tool for prioritizing protection and restoration activities by the THWI. Successful applications should articulate how their projects address watershed health and/or vulnerability, as defined by the Assessment, in the Ranking Criteria outlined in Appendix A.

The final Assessment report can be found at https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-10/documents/tn_hwp_report_final_october2015.pdf

Resources: Funding & Match

Previously Funded Projects from the THWI totaled \$1,401,700 with estimated in-kind leverage from project applicants and partners of over \$1,000,000. THWI project funding amounts ranged from \$32,000 to \$200,000 Please refer to the THWI website for locations and more information on these projects. <https://www.tn.gov/environment/article/wr-ws-tennessee-healthy-watershed-initiative>

For the 2016 RFP, the THWI partners anticipate up to \$500,000 in non-federal funding to support projects that meet the goals of the Initiative. Anticipated funding by the TWHI will range from \$30,000 to \$150,000 per project depending upon the approved project's scope. Projects will be required to leverage additional resources at a minimum of 20% of the value of THWI funds requested, and in-kind leverage will need to be both calculated up front and tracked during project. Final numbers will be required in final report.

After the THWI has reviewed the proposals and selected its recommendations for funding, TDEC will execute grant agreements as funds allow. The grant agreements will set the terms for submission of periodic reimbursement requests and project reporting.

Project Selection Requirements

The following 7 elements are required for your project proposal to be considered for review. The Project must: 1.) fit into at least one of the THWI Strategic Investment Areas, with special preference shown for Restoration Projects and Protection of Waters and Wetlands that align with the Tennessee Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health; 2.) is not intended to help meet regulatory requirements; 3.) leverages additional resources; 4.) must be completed and final invoices submitted by December 1, 2018; 5.) must be within the State of Tennessee; 6.) must have project management with capacity to complete the project; and 7.) must have a project manager with the capacity to administer the funds awarded.

Once approved for review, projects will be ranked according to enhanced criteria specified in the application.

Review Process and Project Funding Process

Selection of Proposals: A Technical Advisory Group comprised of representatives from the MOU signatory agencies and organizations will review and recommend proposals for funding by TDEC by January 15, 2017 based on a ranking system of priorities. The project sponsor reserves the right to fund all or none of the proposals received and to fund partial projects. After projects are selected, the TDEC will execute grants with project recipients as funds allow. Geographic diversity will be one of the considerations in selecting the awardees. Our focus for this funding cycle will be the two strategic investment areas listed above; however funding will not be limited to these two areas.

Please see Appendix A for ranking criteria.

Announcement: The THWI Coordinator, Rob Bullard, will announce awards by emailing and calling applicants. Announcements will also be available on THWI website: <http://www.tn.gov/environment/article/wr-ws-tennessee-healthy-watershed-initiative>

Funding Process: This grant program is a reimbursement program. The selected grant recipients will be reimbursed for up to 100 percent of approved project costs upon submission of documentation/ receipts for expenses incurred and payment of expenses. Invoices will likely be submitted and reimbursed on a quarterly basis. Grantees are required to track and report leverage contributions (cash or in-kind) at a minimum of 20% of the total THWI funds requested.

Start Dates for Projects: We anticipate a 3 month administrative period, such that projects may start April 15, 2017

Expectations for Awarded Projects:

Conditional aspects of the contract include communicating with THWI Coordinator and Stakeholders, submitting a project schedule with milestones and providing quarterly progress reports, monitoring environmental conditions (if applicable), a project outreach and communication plan, tracking in-kind contributions, submitting a final report, and co-planning a dedication ceremony (if applicable). These expectations will be outlined in the final contract for the award.

National Environmental Policy (NEPA) Act Requirements:

A NEPA review may need to be completed before your project can begin. NEPA requires all federal agencies to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of actions they propose to take. NEPA fees may not be covered by grant funds.

For more information: <http://www.epa.gov/compliance/nepa/>

Other Permits:

Please be aware that projects may require coverage under Tennessee's General NPDES Permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activities (CGP) if the amount of land disturbed is equal to one acre or more. Additionally, Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit coverage may be required if water resources are affected during this project.

All permit coverage must be in place before any construction begins. Appropriate erosion prevention and sediment control measures should be installed and maintained for the duration of the project in order to protect all nearby water resources.

Please understand that there may be other permits required than those listed, and other regulatory programs applicable to this project. The applicant is responsible to determine all regulatory programs that are applicable.

Permit fees may not be covered by grant funds.

Preparation and Submittal Guidelines

Who is eligible to apply?

This funding is available to anyone who meets submittal guidelines.

How to submit

Proposal applications must be submitted electronically to the THWI Coordinator, Rob Bullard, at ebullard@tnc.org

Proposals should be submitted in Microsoft Word. If proposal is larger than 5mb, please contact the Coordinator to determine alternative method to submit.

Questions regarding proposal preparation can be directed to Mr. Bullard via email or phone at (615) 383-9909, ext. 223.

If submitting more than one project proposal, please submit each separately.

Time to submit

Proposals should be received by email by end of day November 18, 2016.

Application directions

Please submit your proposal in the following format with headers. **Proposals that do not follow this format may be dropped from consideration.**

Project Manager (Applicant):

Applicant Organization:

Contact Phone:

Contact Email:

Project Title:

Collaborating Partner(s) and their role:

**Additional partners will give your project added value in the project ranking criteria process by the selection committee.*

Abstract (200 word limit):

Strategic Investment Areas: List the strategic investment area, as outlined in the background section, which best represents your project goal as well as any additional strategic investment areas that are applicable to your project. Provide a brief description as to how the project addresses each of the areas. **Additional strategic investment areas will give your project added value in the project ranking criteria process by the selection committee.*

Required and Enhanced THWI Project Elements:

Required Elements

Please fill out 1 table below by checking the box at the end of each row if it applies to your project. Then give a brief explanation. Once approved for review, projects will be ranked according to the enhanced criteria specified in the application.

Required Elements: The following evaluation criteria apply to all proposals. All of these criteria must be met in order to receive a full review.	
	Check if yes
THWI Strategic Investment Area. Project fits into at least one of the THWI Strategic Investment Areas. <i>Brief Explanation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Above and Beyond Compliance. Project is a proactive measure to improve and protect water resources. The project is not solely intended to help stakeholders meet regulatory requirements. <i>Brief Explanation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leverages Additional Resources. Additional agencies or organizations providing time and/or financial contributions to plan and implement the project at a minimum of 20%. <i>Brief Explanation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Completion. THWI funded aspect of project must be completed and final invoices submitted by December 1, 2016. <i>Brief Explanation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Location. Project must be located within the State of Tennessee. <i>Brief Explanation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project Management Capacity. Project Manager (Applicant) must have capacity to complete the project. <i>Brief Explanation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to Administer Funds. Project Manager (Applicant) must have the capacity to administer the funds awarded. <i>Brief Explanation.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Enhanced Elements - Projects will be further prioritized based on how well they meet the Enhanced Elements.

Once approved for review, projects will be ranked according to the enhanced criteria specified in the application. **Please fill out scores for 1 table, in Appendix A**, that corresponds with the primary strategic investment area that your project fits into, and paste into this section. Please note that if your project meets more than one strategic investment area, this will be considered an enhanced element in the table.

Project Plans

Project Introduction and Background:

Project Area:

Project Goals and Objectives:

Project Methods:

Project Deliverables:

Timeline and Budget

Project timeline and major tasks: (list each of the deliverables, summary of tasks and timeframe for completion)

Total Requested Funds: (All direct and indirect costs requested)

Total In-kind Leverage: (All in-kind or cash contributions)

Total Project Cost: (THWI funds + in-kind leverage)

Budget:

Line Item (from Project Deliverables)	Goals and/or Objectives (from Project Plan)	Description Of Action (include if action is in-house or contracted, if contracted, please list name and contact of contractor)	Total Requested Funds

Budget Narrative (400 word limit): (Justification of budget line-items)

In-kind Leverage:

Name of Partner/Contributor	Line Item (from Project Deliverables)	Goals and/or Objectives (from Project Plan)	Description Of Action	Total in-kind leverage value

Maintenance and Long-Term Plans

Project Plan Maintenance:

Supporting Letters:

Letters of Commitment are required for each partner listed. This letter should come from the lead of the organization or entity and be directed to the THWI. The description of the commitment should be included in the proposal in the project narrative.

Letters of Support are required for any infrastructure or capital project. The letter should come from the chief elected or appointed official (e.g., mayor), giving assurance that the community is committed to completing and maintaining the project.

Appendix A. Ranking Criteria for selection of THWI projects

The top 2-3 projects in each of the 5 tables below will be selected to move forward to the final ranking. Then the amount of funding available and project locations will determine final selection of projects. Please fill out the table that best represents your project, then include in your proposal. Include total points and provide a brief explanation.

Regional Water Planning Strategic Investment Area	Possible Points	Total Points
Enhanced Elements		
Alignment with TN Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health. Proposed project advances water planning efforts in watershed ranked highly for health and/or vulnerability by Assessment. Brief Explanation:	25	
Collaborative effort. Proposed project aligns with the program goals and resources of local, state and/or federal agencies and is implemented in collaboration with partners. (5 points per additional partner, max 20 points) Brief Explanation:	20	
In-Kind Leverage. High Demonstration of in-kind leverage of over 40% Brief Explanation:	20	
Multiple Strategic Investment Areas. Project goals align with at minimum 1 other strategic investment area in addition to Regional Water Planning. (5 points per additional strategic investment area, max 10 points) Brief Explanation of each additional area:	10	
Efficiency. Maximize THWI funds used for results and minimize administrative overhead. (15 points for no overhead, 5 points for ≤5% of total funding for overhead) Brief Explanation:	15	
Professional meeting outreach. Project specifically plans for engaging in one or more appropriate professional meetings and presenting project results. (5 points per meeting, 10 points max) Brief Explanation:	10	
Supports goals of THWI and results of WRTAC. Plan is likely to result in measurable, tangible improvements to water quality or wildlife. (scale of 1-5 with 5 being most impact, multiply number by 5 to get final score, max 25 points) Brief Explanation:	25	
Total Points out of 125	125	0

Restoration Project Strategic Investment Area	Possible Points	Total Points
Enhanced Elements		
<p>Alignment with TN Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health. Proposed project occurs in watershed ranked highly for health and/or vulnerability by Assessment. Brief Explanation:</p>	25	
<p>Collaborative effort. Proposed project aligns with the program goals and resources of local, state and/or federal agencies and is implemented in collaboration with partners. (5 points per additional partner, max 20 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	20	
<p>In-Kind Leverage. High Demonstration of in-kind leverage of over 40% Brief Explanation:</p>	20	
<p>High Visibility. Project will be implemented in a high traffic area or can easily be seen by stakeholders for educational and demonstrational purposes. (5 points semi-visible, 10 points highly visible) Brief Explanation:</p>	10	
<p>Expected effects to water quality or wildlife - Project provides measurable benefits that can be reported in a quantifiable way, for example, number of river miles protected or enhanced, or reductions in sediment or nutrient loadings.(scale of 1-5 with 5 being most impact, multiply number by 5 to get final score, max 25 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	25	
<p>Multiple Strategic Investment Areas. Project goals align with at minimum 1 other strategic investment area (Research and monitoring and education and empowerment) in addition to Restoration Project. (5 points per each, max 10 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	10	
<p>Professional meeting outreach. Project specifically plans for engaging in one appropriate professional meeting to presenting project results. (5 points for the meeting, max 5 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	5	
<p>Efficiency. Maximize THWI funds used for results and minimize administrative overhead. (10 points for no overhead, 5 points for ≤5% of total funding for overhead, max 10 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	10	
Total points out of 125	125	

<p align="center"><u>Protection of Waters and Wetlands Strategic Investment Area</u></p> <p align="center">Enhanced Elements</p>	<p align="center">Possible Points</p>	<p align="center">Total Points</p>
<p>Alignment with TN Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health. Proposed project protects waters and wetlands in watershed ranked highly for health and/or vulnerability by Assessment. Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">25</p>	
<p>Collaborative effort. Proposed project aligns with the program goals and resources of local, state and/or federal agencies and is implemented in collaboration with partners. (5 points per additional partner, max 20 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">20</p>	
<p>In-Kind Leverage. High Demonstration of in-kind leverage of over 40% Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">20</p>	
<p>Multiple Strategic Investment Areas. Project goals align with a minimum 1 other strategic investment area in addition to Protection of Waters and Wetlands. (5 points per additional strategic investment area, max 10 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">10</p>	
<p>Efficiency. Maximize THWI funds used for results and minimize administrative overhead. (10 points for no overhead, 5 points for ≤5% of total funding for overhead) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">10</p>	
<p>Professional meeting outreach. Project specifically plans for engaging in one or more appropriate professional meetings and presenting project results. (5 points per meeting, max 10 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">10</p>	
<p>Supports goals of THWI. Actions address immediate and long term threats to ‘critical’ habitats and protection is a long-term solution. (scale of 1-3 with 3 being most impact, multiply number by 10 to get final score, max 30 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">30</p>	
<p align="right">Total points out of 125</p>	<p align="center">125</p>	

<p align="center"><u>Research and Monitoring</u></p> <p align="center"><i>Enhanced Elements</i></p>	<p align="center">Possible Points</p>	<p align="center">Total Points</p>
<p>Alignment with TN Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health. Proposed project advances understanding of key metric utilized in Assessment methodology in watershed ranked highly for health and/or vulnerability. Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">25</p>	
<p>Collaborative effort. Proposed project aligns with the program goals and resources of local, state and/or federal agencies and is implemented in collaboration with partners. (5 points per additional partner, max 20 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">20</p>	
<p>In-Kind Leverage. High Demonstration of in-kind leverage of over 40% Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">20</p>	
<p>Multiple Strategic Investment Areas. Project goals align with at minimum 1 other strategic investment area in addition to stated Strategic Investment Area. (5 points per additional strategic investment area, max 15 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">15</p>	
<p>Efficiency. Maximize THWI funds used for results and minimize administrative overhead. (10 points for no overhead, 5 points for ≤5% of total funding for overhead) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">10</p>	
<p>Professional meeting outreach. Project specifically plans for engaging in one or more appropriate professional meetings and presenting project results. (5 points per meeting, max 10 points). Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">10</p>	
<p>Supports goals of THWI. Results are directly applicable to decision making for protection or restoration of Tennessee's Waters.(scale of 1-5 with 5 being most impact, multiply number by 5 to get final score, max 25 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">25</p>	
<p align="right">Total points out of 125</p>	<p align="center">125</p>	

<p align="center"><u>Other Strategic Investment Areas</u> (Economic Development, Education & Empowerment, Identification and Exportation of Best Practices, and Funding) <i>Enhanced Elements</i></p>	<p align="center">Possible Points</p>	<p align="center">Total Points</p>
<p>Alignment with TN Integrated Assessment of Watershed Health. Proposed project focuses on watershed ranked highly for health and/or vulnerability by Assessment. Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">25</p>	
<p>Collaborative effort. Proposed project aligns with the program goals and resources of local, state and/or federal agencies and is implemented in collaboration with partners. (5 points per additional partner, max 20 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">20</p>	
<p>In-Kind Leverage. High Demonstration of in-kind leverage of over 40% Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">20</p>	
<p>Multiple Strategic Investment Areas. Project goals align with at minimum 1 other strategic investment area in addition to stated Strategic Investment Area. (5 points per additional strategic investment area, max 20 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">20</p>	
<p>Efficiency. Maximize THWI funds used for results and minimize administrative overhead. (10 points for no overhead, 5 points for ≤5% of total funding for overhead) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">10</p>	
<p>Professional meeting outreach. Project specifically plans for engaging in one appropriate professional meeting to presenting project results. (5 points for the meeting, max 5 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">5</p>	
<p>Supports goals of THWI and results of WRTAC. Plan is likely to result in measurable, tangible improvements to water quality or wildlife. (scale of 1-5 with 5 being most impact, multiply number by 5 to get final score, max 25 points) Brief Explanation:</p>	<p align="center">25</p>	
<p align="right">Total points out of 125</p>	<p align="center">125</p>	