



Wetland GP Surcharge Restoration Program Guidelines

Prepared by the WDNR Waterways Program

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Program Overview

The Wetland GP Surcharge (GPS) Restoration Program was created out of the 2011 Wisconsin Act 118. In accordance with [s. 281.36\(11\) Wis. Stats.](#) the program adds a surcharge to every Wetland GP1 issued for the “restoration and creation of wetlands”. Fees were first collected in 2013. As of 2023, the GPS Program has funded 15 projects totaling 244 acres of wetland restoration and 0.80 miles of stream restoration. Currently, GPS fees are \$285 for wetland permits for impacts less than 0.10 acres and \$425 for permits for impacts between 0.10 and 0.23 acres.

All GPS projects must consist of the restoration of wetlands or related aquatic resources. Highest priority projects involve restoring wetlands to areas where they currently are not. These projects often consist of restoration of ditched or tiled cropland. Other ideal project components include wetland seeding and invasive species control post-restoration. Medium priority projects consist of hydrologic restoration of existing wetlands, stream restoration projects with a demonstrable wetland benefit, and invasive species control in high-quality wetlands. Low priority projects include wetland creation (putting a wetland where there historically was not one), invasive species control of low-quality wetlands, and upland restoration next to wetlands.

All GPS projects must be open to public access for hunting, fishing, trapping, cross-country skiing, and hiking, or some combination thereof, and will be determined on a site-by-site basis. Previous project awards typically ranged from \$20,000 - \$40,000. The DNR is currently seeking proposals that do not exceed \$100,000. Anyone is eligible to apply for funding. Nonprofits, private consultants, landowners, and DNR programs all may apply.

Project Application

Before completing an application, contact Josh Brown at JoshuaA.Brown@wisconsin.gov to discuss your project. It is important to discuss project details with the DNR before applying to ensure a project is eligible and has potential to be selected.

When completing the application (<https://apps.dnr.wi.gov/doclink/forms/3500-129.pdf>), the applicant should focus on the hydrologic restoration components of the project and how the project increases wetland functions. These components should be addressed and detailed in the “Project Description” and the “Supplemental Information” sections. The types and quantities of hydrologic restoration efforts should also be included.

The amounts of both GP Surcharge funding requested and any matching funds should be listed in the “Funding Request and Matching Funds” section. Private or public matching funds, both cash or in-kind, that have either already been awarded or are pending should be listed in each row of the table provided. Match is not required but applications including match will rank highly.

Any other relevant project information should be included in the “Supplemental Information” section. This includes maps or plans showing project details, additional budget and match information, letters of

support, and any proof of public access. These additional documents will help the GPS Review Team better understand project components and benefits.

Applicants should email the completed application and any supporting information to Josh Brown at JoshuaA.Brown@wisconsin.gov by December 15 of each year.

Project Selection Criteria

GP Surcharge applications will be evaluated using the below criteria based on information provided by the applicant in their application. The GPS Review Team, composed of at least three DNR wetland experts, will provide scores to these criteria and will provide scores for each application and select projects to fund/make recommendations for project funding to the DNR Waterways Leadership Team. Review Team members that are involved in any projects will recuse themselves from scoring that application. The GPS Review Team reserves the right to make partial funding awards for all projects.

Project Selection Criteria

- Design – The project design uses best practices, is appropriate for the site, and restores wetland hydrology.
- Benefit - The project provides benefits to wetlands or associated aquatic resources and is open to public access.
- Context – The project is appropriate given the landscape and watershed settings and ideally builds off other conservation projects in the area.
- Budget – The project budget is appropriate give the project scope, and ideally contains match funding of some sort.
- Sustainability – The project has a high chance of long-term success and contains some sort of long-term site protection.

Project Selection

Selected project applicants will be notified via an award letter by February 28th of the year after the application is due. After the award letter is sent, the DNR will work with the applicant to discuss project timelines, details, and contracting requirements.

External Projects

Funding for GP Surcharge project to non-DNR groups is awarded via reimbursement for approved work. Before funding can be awarded to external groups, each applicant must enter into a contract with the DNR, signed by both the partner and the DNR. Please contact Josh Brown at JoshuaA.Brown@wisconsin.gov to discuss contracting details.

DNR Projects

DNR Programs (Natural Heritage Conservation, Wildlife) can also apply for GPS funding. A “DNR Project” is defined as any project on DNR land where a DNR program completes the project or administers the funding. GPS funding can fund DNR staff time to complete a restoration project themselves, or the funding can be contracted out by DNR staff to complete projects on state land, following standard State contracting and bidding processes. Funded DNR projects will be assigned unique budget codes. Tracking the balance and appropriate use of the funds is the responsibility of the DNR staff managing the project.