

**Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund  
Proposal Categories and Evaluation Criteria**

***River Restoration***

According to the Settlement Agreement, proposals in this category should focus on “river restoration work including, but not limited to, the following: dam removal; acquisition of development rights and property; fish passage at non-hydro dams, unlicensed hydro facilities, and natural obstructions; and other riverine habitat improvements, including water quality improvements or improvements in aquatic habitats. River restoration projects shall be targeted to developing premier salmonid fisheries; increasing and improving habitat for resident salmonids and Atlantic salmon (e.g. improving the structure of fish habitats, water temperatures and other similar measures); providing improved passage for migratory aquatic species; increasing or improving habitat for riverine dependent species; and improving water quality including reducing sedimentation and non-point-source pollution.”

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
Riverine habitat	Restores riverine habitat to free-flowing conditions	Improves existing riverine habitat	Protects existing riverine habitat
Fish migration, passage, and access	Opens or restores river channel	Creates man-made fish passage	Improves existing passage or migration routes
Water quality--prevents or reduces non-point-source pollution (incl. sedimentation and BOD), improves temperature conditions for resident biota, or reduces bioaccumulation of toxins	Results in a measurable improvement in water quality that addresses an identified impairment	Results in a measurable improvement in water quality	Contributes to an improvement in water quality
Rare or exemplary natural communities	Benefits S1 or S2 communities	Benefits S3 communities	Benefits other natural communities
Rare species or their habitats	Benefits state or federally endangered species	Benefits state or federally threatened species	Benefits other species of special concern
Other considerations that were not foreseen	High benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund	Moderate benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund	Low benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund

## *Wetlands*

According to the Settlement Agreement, proposals in this category should focus on “restoration, protection, and enhancement of wetlands and adjacent protective buffer areas . . . The goal is to restore or enhance an amount of wetlands outside of the (FERC-licensed hydroelectric) project (boundary)—both upstream and downstream—to compensate for the wetlands either lost or adversely affected as a result of the hydroelectric project. If sufficient wetland values cannot be compensated for through restoration or enhancement, wetlands and their protective buffer areas may be acquired by outright purchase or protected through perpetual easements.”

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
Wetlands (including vernal pools) - wetland functions and values and associated buffers	Restores or enhances a significant wetland or buffer	Restores or enhances a wetland or buffer	Protects a wetland or buffer through acquisition of fee or easement
Water quality--prevents or reduces non-point-source pollution (including sedimentation and BOD), improves temperature conditions for resident biota, or reduces bioaccumulation of toxins	Results in a measurable improvement in water quality that addresses an identified impairment	Results in a measurable improvement in water quality	Contributes to an improvement in water quality
Rare or exemplary natural communities	Benefits S1 or S2 communities	Benefits S3 communities	Benefits other natural communities
Rare species or their habitats	Benefits state or federally endangered species	Benefits state or federally threatened species	Benefits other species of special concern
Other considerations that were not foreseen	High benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund	Moderate benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund	Low benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund

## *Shoreland Protection*

According to the Settlement Agreement, proposals in this category should focus on “riverine shoreland protection by restoring naturalized buffers along the river and/or streams in the drainage and stabilizing eroding shorelands both up and downstream of the FMF project area, to reduce water quality problems and serve other purposes, such as establishing or maintaining riparian wildlife habitat and wildlife travel corridors.... Funds may be used to acquire, establish and protect riparian corridors and to implement measures to reduce shoreline erosion in such corridors. The emphasis in these latter efforts shall be maintaining or re-establishing forested shoreland buffers and on bioengineering rather than structural solutions to shoreline stabilization. This category also includes protecting unique or unusual natural areas, and areas of cultural significance including historic and archaeological resources where they occur in riverine shorelands and important recreation lands and scenic features.”

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
Riparian habitat	Restores or protects high-value, contiguous riparian habitat	Restores or protects contiguous riparian habitat	Restores or protects isolated riparian habitat
Eroding shorelines	Reduces erosion that is causing an identified impairment through buffer protection or bioengineering	Reduces erosion that is having adverse environmental impacts through buffer protection or bioengineering	Prevents erosion through buffer protection or bioengineering
Water quality--prevents or reduces non-point-source pollution (including sedimentation and BOD), improves temperature conditions for resident biota, or reduces bioaccumulation of toxins	Results in a measurable improvement in water quality that addresses an identified impairment	Results in a measurable improvement in water quality	Contributes to an improvement in water quality
Rare or exemplary natural communities	Benefits S1 or S2 communities	Benefits S3 communities	Benefits other natural communities
Rare species or their habitats	Benefits state or federally endangered species	Benefits state or federally threatened species	Benefits other species of special concern
Natural areas	Protects nationally important natural areas	Protects regionally important natural areas	Protects locally important natural areas
Cultural, historical or archeological resources	Protects nationally important resources	Protects regionally important resources	Protects locally important resources
Scenic resources	Protects or restores nationally important scenic resources	Protects or restores regionally important scenic resources	Protects or restores locally important scenic resources
Recreational resources or recreational access	Creates or enhances recreational resources identified in state, regional or local plans, while reducing ecological impacts	Creates or enhances recreational resources identified in state, regional or local plans, with minimal ecological impacts	Creates or enhances other recreational resources, with minimal ecological impacts
Other considerations that were not foreseen	High benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund	Moderate benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund	Low benefits for the purposes specified in establishing the fund

## *General Criteria for Proposal Selection*

Under the terms of the Settlement Agreement, the Mitigation and Enhancement Fund will be used to support projects, activities or endeavors within the watershed of the Connecticut River upstream of the confluence of the White and Connecticut Rivers at White River Junction, Vermont, and Lebanon, New Hampshire. Proposals should pertain to one or more of the previous categories (River Restoration, Wetlands, Shoreland Protection) and will be evaluated according to criteria in these categories. Proposals also will be considered using the following general criteria, which will be used to evaluate the relative strength of proposals that have comparable environmental benefits. The general criteria will be used as a “tiebreaker” if necessary to select between competing projects.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Low</b>
Partnerships and/or leveraging	Many or strong partners and/or funds will leverage among the largest financial commitments from others	One or more experienced partners and/or funds	Few or inexperienced partners and/or funds will leverage little or no financial commitment from others
Local support and participation	Proposed and strongly supported by local governments, organizations, individuals and/or landowners	Proposed and supported by local governments, organizations, individuals and/or landowners	Not locally proposed, but supported by local governments, organizations, individuals and/or landowners
Applicant past performance and likelihood of success	Applicant has successfully completed several like/previous projects; success is highly likely given objectives and scope	Applicant has limited, but positive past experience; success is very likely given objectives and scope	Applicant has no past experience; success is moderately likely given objectives and scope
Contributes to regional management goals, plan, and priorities as articulated by responsible agencies	Strong contribution to fulfillment of regional goals, plans and priorities of responsible agencies	Moderate contribution to fulfillment of regional goals, plans and priorities of responsible agencies	Little or no contribution to fulfillment of regional goals, plans and priorities of responsible agencies
Likelihood that local suppliers/contractors will be used	Solid commitment and process to solicit and encourage local bids	Unclear commitment and process to solicit and encourage local bids	Poor commitment or process to solicit and encourage local bids