

Upper Thames River **Phosphorus Reduction Program Guide**



2024-2025

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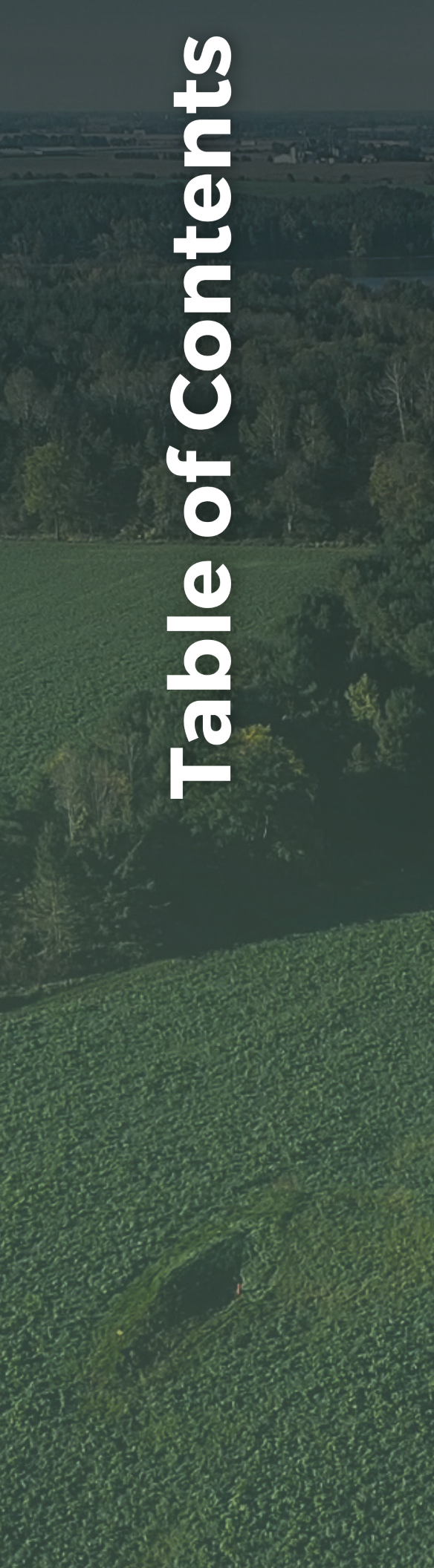
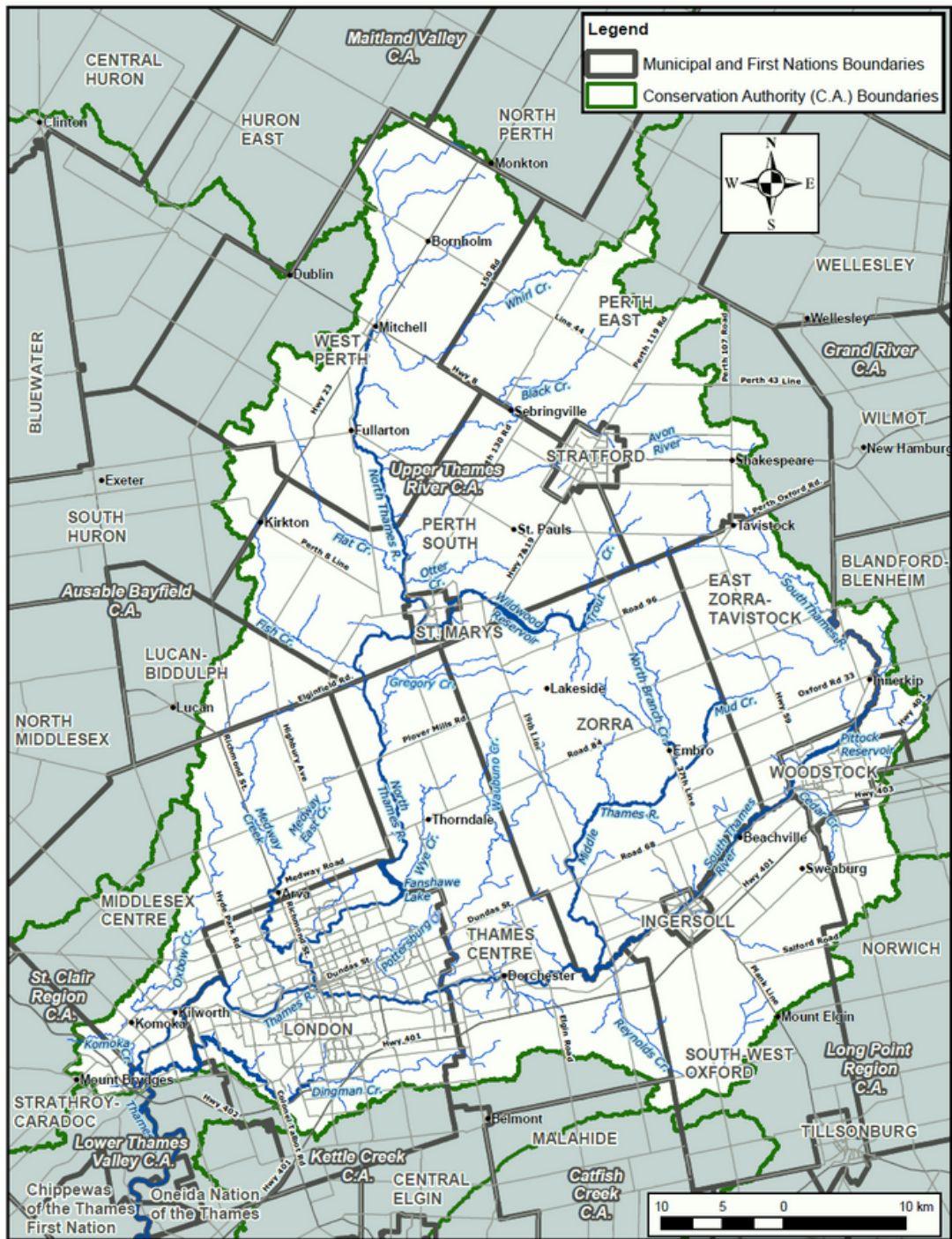


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The Upper Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Program is available to farmers and landowners within the Upper Thames River watershed area.



Overview

The Upper Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Program provides financial incentives to UTRCA farmers and landowners to support soil health and water quality projects that help manage phosphorus losses from farm fields. The project will advance Canada's commitment under the Canada-United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

The program is being delivered by the Upper Thames River Conservation Authority.

The Thames River Phosphorus Reduction Program is funded in part by the Canada Water Agency.

Eligible Projects and Staff Contact

Applications are being accepted for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. This includes projects implemented in the fall of 2024, and spring of 2025. Applications are being reviewed as they are received. All Claim Forms will be due February 28, 2025. (Please note that the maximum amount of funding that a farm business can receive over the course of the program is \$75,000.)

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS	GRANT RATE	MAXIMUM GRANT	STAFF CONTACT
Cover Crops	\$30/acre - Not Harvested/Grazed \$15/acre - Harvested/Grazed	No Max	Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Reduced Tillage	\$30/acre - No-Till and Strip \$15/acre - Other Systems	No Max	Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Subsurface Phosphorus Application	\$30/acre	No Max	Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Soil Testing and Crop Nutrient Planning	80%	\$2,000	Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Erosion Control	70%	\$8,000	Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Livestock Watercourse Fencing	70%	\$5,000	Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Clean Water Division	70%	\$8,000	Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Innovative Actions	70%	\$5,000	Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Manure Management	(Coming 2025)		Chris van Esbroeck ext. 272 vanesbroeckc@thamesriver.on.ca
Tree Planting			Contact Rob Davies at daviesr@thamesriver.on.ca

How to Apply

Step 1: Review Project Guidelines.

Step 2: Submit an online application stating the location(s) and details, or contact UTRCA.

Note: Applications are reviewed as they are received. UTRCA will notify you if you are approved, or whether more information is required.

Step 3: Implement your project.

Step 4: Submit the Expense Claim Form, and provide required documentation.

Step 5: UTRCA inspects the project.

Step 6: Payment is issued.

Eligibility

1. A financial incentive to implement a best management practice may be paid to an applicant who:
 - is a resident of Ontario;
 - is a registered owner of property in the target area used for agricultural purposes or whose property is under the influence of agriculture.
 - Per acre incentive payments may be paid to the tenant farmer.
2. The project must be located in the Upper Thames River watershed and protect or improve water quality by reducing phosphorus transport to surface water.
3. The following costs are generally eligible for grant assistance:
 - purchased materials and supplies;
 - professional fees;
 - fees for design and construction.

Please Note: The labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business are not eligible, unless reviewed and approved by the UTRCA prior to any work starting.

4. Applicants are permitted to apply to multiple categories on a single field, subject to limits of eligibility described below.
5. Projects must meet all legal requirements including but not limited to local municipal bylaws and Provincial Acts.
6. All approvals and permits are the responsibility of the applicant.

Limits of Eligibility

1. Grants are limited to projects undertaken on eligible properties in the Upper Thames River watershed, that have the potential to reduce phosphorus transport to surface water.
2. Any applicant who proceeds with a project before written confirmation has been issued, has no assurance that financial assistance will be provided.
3. An applicant must specify the fiscal year (April 1 – March 31) in which the project will be completed. If the project cannot be completed within the specified year, there is no guarantee that funding will be available in the following year.
4. Project invoices before June 26, 2024, for the fiscal year 2024-2025, are not eligible for project funding. Invoices must be dated between April 1 and February 28 for the fiscal year that your project is approved.
5. Funds will be allocated to projects based on their potential for reducing phosphorus transport to surface water. Applicants undertaking suites of BMPs and projects that will have a sustained impact year over year will be prioritized.
6. All projects must be completed, and claims submitted by February 28 of each year.
7. Funding can be stacked with other programs up to 100% of eligible costs, as long as the other programs allow for stacking. Applicants must inform UTRCA of other funding sources.
8. Fields enrolled in other cost sharing/rebate programs are not eligible for incentive payments in this program.
9. The maximum amount of funding a farm business can receive over the course of the program is \$75,000.





Cover Crop Project Guidelines

The purpose of this project category is to reduce runoff and erosion from agricultural fields, by planting cover crops and maintaining residue cover, during the non-growing season.

Rates

\$30/Ac.

Not Harvested/Grazed

\$15/Ac.

Harvested/Grazed

Requirements

- Must be located in the Upper Thames River watershed;
- Must provide adequate cover to the field for non-growing season;
- A minimum of 60% field residue is required the following spring.

Eligible Projects

- Cover crops seeded with an annual crop or interseeded into an annual crop;
- Cover crops seeded following the harvest of an annual crop;
- Cover crops used in transition for fragile land retirement projects;
- Single-species or multi-species cover crops;
- Fall burndown of cover crop accepted, provided residue criteria are met in the spring.

Ineligible Projects

- Crops harvested as a marketable grain crop in the following year (e.g., winter cereals);
- Winter wheat, alfalfa, canola, and triticale as a single species;
- Planting of invasive species.

General Comments

- New applicants or those who have not previously used cover crops will be given priority;
- Priority will be given to projects based on environmental benefits.

The Process

- 1 Submit an application.
- 2 UTRCA will review, and follow up with you with their decision.
- 3 If eligible, UTRCA will request project cost information and field maps.
- 4 Upon project completion, UTRCA will review the claim and perform a final inspection ensuring requirements are met.
- 5 Payment will be issued.



Reduced Tillage Project Guidelines

This project category was designed to prevent soil erosion, by adopting reduced tillage systems that maintain residue cover over winter, and following spring planting.

Rates

\$30/Ac.

Strip-till or No-till

\$15/Ac.

Other systems

Requirements

Field(s) must be in the Upper Thames watershed.

Eligible Projects

Adoption of tillage systems that maintain residue cover during the non-growing season and leave a minimum of 30% of cover (living or dead) after spring planting.

Eligible Systems

- Strip-till or zone tillage ahead of planting corn or beans;
- No-till planting of corn or beans;
- Other tillage systems, if 30% residue cover is achieved;
- Significant modifications to existing reduced tillage systems may be considered.

Ineligible Projects

- Tillage systems that do not meet residue requirements;
- No-till or reduced till planting of winter cereals.

General Comments

- Priority is given to applicants adopting new practices;
- Priority will be given to projects with strong environmental merit.

The Process

- 1 Submit an application.
- 2 UTRCA will review, and follow up with you with their decision.
- 3 If eligible, UTRCA will request project cost information and field maps.
- 4 Upon project completion, UTRCA will perform a final inspection ensuring requirements are met.
- 5 Payment will be issued.



Subsurface Phosphorus Application Project Guidelines

This project category was designed to encourage producers to utilize application equipment that places phosphorus below the surface.

Rates

\$30/Ac. Subsurface Phosphorus Placement

Project Details

- Per acre incentives are available for alternative P application practices that reduce the risk of runoff through surface water and tile drainage flow pathways;
- These practices can be utilized to improve the efficiency of crop nutrient uptake, reduce susceptibility to nutrient runoff and loss, and increase crop yields;
- Eligible practices include P injection, banding, and variable rate application of P;
- Subsurface placement equipment includes, but is not limited to: planter, sidedress, strip-till or nutrient placement toolbars;
- Phosphorus must be placed a minimum of two inches below the soil surface.

Requirements

Field(s) must be located in the Upper Thames watershed.

Ineligible Activities

- Nitrogen application practices;
- Applications of less than 20 lbs/ac of P2O5;
- Pop-up, in-furrow, on-the-seed, applications are not eligible;
- Broadcasting and incorporation of phosphorus is not eligible.

Required Documentation

Applicants will be required to provide proof of P application with the claim. This can be a photo of the implement in the field on the day of application, a service provider invoice, or a service provider receipt.

General Comments

- Project must be approved by UTRCA prior to completion to receive funding.
- Equipment is expected to be calibrated and follow manufacturers or specifications provided by qualified professionals.
- Applications of nutrients must comply with Nutrient Management Protocol for Ontario Regulation 267/03 made under the *Nutrient Management Act, 2002*.
- Preference will be given to applications that demonstrate conservation tillage and cover crop use.
- Priority will be given to fields where subsurface application is a new practice.
- Priority will be given to projects based on environmental merit.

The Process

- 1 Submit an application.
- 2 UTRCA will review, and follow up with you with their decision.
- 3 If eligible, UTRCA will request project cost information and field maps.
- 4 Upon project completion, UTRCA will review the claim, verify proof of P application, and perform a final inspection ensuring project meets requirements.
- 5 Payment will be issued.



Soil Testing and Crop Nutrient Planning Project Guidelines

This project category was designed to help manage soil nutrients and improve water quality through better nutrient management decisions.

Cost Share

- 80% of eligible project costs;
- Maximum Payment: \$2,000;
- This project allows for stacked funding with other programs up to 100% if allowed. Applicants must inform UTRCA staff of additional funding.

Requirements

- Field(s) must be in the Upper Thames watershed;
- Must support subsurface or reduced P fertilizer applications.

Eligible Projects

A 5-Year Crop Nutrient Plan, covering at least one full crop rotation, including:

- Soil sampling and analysis;
- Field maps with sensitive feature locations;
- Acreage, soil type, and crop rotation/tillage practices;
- Timing, source, placement, and rates of applied nutrients;
- Crop removal and nutrient balance, including legume and manure credits;
- Fertilizer recommendations (including organic amendments) and provincial guidelines;
- Management practices to reduce nutrient loss.

The plan may include other eligible activities to support the development of the crop nutrient plan, such as:

- Manure sampling and analysis;
- Field profitability mapping services;
- Plant tissue sampling and analysis;
- Use of NMAN or other planning tools.

Eligible Costs

- Professional services and consulting fees;
- Contracted labour costs;
- Soil and manure nutrient sampling and analysis from accredited labs.

Ineligible Costs

- Equipment, computer hardware, and software purchases;
- Crop scouting and pest monitoring;
- Fees related to the developing a Nutrient Management Plan required under the *Nutrient Management Act*;
- Invoices not issued in the applications name or farm business;
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.

General Comments

- Project must be approved by UTRCA prior to completion;
- Applicant must work with a qualified professional (e.g. Nutrient Management Specialist, Certified Crop Advisor, Professional Agrologist, etc.);
- Nutrient applications must follow Ontario Regulation 267/03 setbacks;
- Preference for projects using conservation tillage and cover crops.

The Process

- 1 Submit an application.
- 2 UTRCA will review, and follow up with you with their decision.
- 3 Notify UTRCA the project is complete, and provide a copy of the nutrient plan and maps.
- 4 Submit an expense claim form with proof of payment (e.g. copy of e-transfer, the cancelled cheque or bank statement.)
- 5 UTRCA will review to ensure the project meets requirements.
- 6 Payment will be issued.



Erosion Control Project Guidelines

This project category was designed to help control soil erosion problems on farmland which impact surface water quality.

Rates

- 70% of eligible project costs;
- Maximum Payment: \$8,000;
- Funding can be stacked with other programs up to 100% if allowed. Applicants must inform UTRCA of additional funding.

Requirements

Field(s) must be in the Upper Thames watershed.

Eligible Projects

- Drop Structures;
- Grass Waterways;
- Low Level Stream Crossing for livestock and equipment;
- Rock Chutes
- Streambank Stabilization;
- Terraces;
- Water and Sediment Control Basins.

Eligible Costs

- Professional services and consulting fees;
- Contracted labour costs;
- Purchase of materials for eligible projects.

Ineligible Costs

- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents, and the applicant's business;
- Permits and fees;
- Project must not be a legislative or legal requirement;
- New tile drainage that is not part of the project;
- Costs associated with developing engineer reports for municipal drainage projects;
- Invoices not issued in the applications name or farm business;
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.

General Comments

- Project must be approved by UTRCA prior to completion to receive funding;
- Projects must be constructed to the standards specified in the OMAFA Soil Erosion Manual;
- Project must be designed and constructed by a qualified erosion control contractor:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/soil-erosion-control-contractors-certificate-holders>
- Design by professional engineers may be advisable on complex and/or large projects. Supervision of construction is not mandatory, yet may be specified as required by program representatives on large and/or complex projects;
- Preference will be given to applications that demonstrate conservation tillage and cover crop use;
- Projects must obtain approval from appropriate agencies prior to construction;
- Any work done on municipal drains requires prior approval from the municipality;
- All collected water must be taken to a sufficient and legal outlet;
- Conservation Authority staff should complete final inspection and ensure the project meets the requirements for funding.

The Process

- 1 Submit an application.
- 2 UTRCA will review, and follow up with you with their decision.
- 3 Notify UTRCA the project is complete.
- 4 Submit an expense claim form with proof of payment (e.g. copy of e-transfer, the cancelled cheque or bank statement.).
- 5 UTRCA will review and perform a final inspection ensuring project meets requirements.
- 6 Payment will be issued.



Livestock Watercourse Fencing Project Guidelines

This project category was designed to improve surface water quality by controlling livestock access to watercourses and wetlands.

Rates

- 70% of eligible project costs;
- Maximum Payment: \$5,000;
- Funding can be stacked with other programs up to 100% if allowed. Applicants must inform UTRCA of additional funding.

Project Details

Maximum cost share will not exceed \$5/foot installed or \$4/foot for materials.

Fencing

- Temporary fencing will be considered eligible but will require a signed agreement requiring the applicant to install the fence prior to livestock being introduced to the pasture every year and to maintain the fence while livestock are present in the pasture;
- Fencing must be at least 10 feet (3.4 m) from the top of the bank of any watercourse unless access for drain maintenance is required;
- Only fencing along a ditch/watercourse or wetland will be considered for funding.

Alternative Water Systems

Watering systems are eligible for funding only where livestock are restricted from the watercourse.

Projects in and along waterways and ditches may need approval by municipalities, the Ministry of Natural Resources, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, or the Conservation Authority prior to implementation. Any work done on municipal drains also requires prior approval from the municipality. The applicant is responsible for acquiring all necessary approvals.

Requirements

Field(s) must be in the Upper Thames watershed.

Eligible Projects

- Fencing along watercourses and wetlands;
- Alternative watering devices.

Eligible Costs

- Engineering fees;
- Labour (other than applicant or applicant's dependent family);
- Permanent and temporary fencing;
- Alternative water devices such as nose pumps, spring boxes, wind and solar powered pumping units (other systems may be considered).

Ineligible Costs

- New operations or a change in management are not eligible;
- Primary hydro lines;
- Permits;
- Cost of drilling new wells;
- Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business.
- Invoices not issued in the applications name or farm business;
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.

The Process

- 1 Submit an application.
- 2 UTRCA will review, and follow up with you.
- 3 If eligible, UTRCA will request field maps and project cost information. Maps must clearly identify field boundaries.
- 4 Notify UTRCA the project is complete.
- 5 UTRCA will review and ensure the project meets the requirements.
- 6 Payment will be issued.



Clean Water Diversion Project Guidelines

This project category was designed to help reduce the amount of contaminated runoff from manure storages and exercise yards by diverting clean rain and snow meltwater away from sources of contamination to a satisfactory outlet.

Rates

- 70% of eligible project costs;
- Maximum Payment: \$8,000;
- Funding can be stacked with other programs up to 100% if allowed. Applicants must inform UTRCA of additional funding.

Project Details

- Downspouts located where livestock can access them must be made of Schedule 40 PVC (or stronger materials) and be well secured to prevent dislodging;
- All clean water diversion projects must discharge clean water away from any source of contamination and not pose other hazards such as soil erosion;
- Berms, tile outlets and ditches must be properly protected.

Requirements

Field(s) must be in the Upper Thames watershed.

Eligible Projects

- Eavestroughs that direct water away from exercise yards, and manure storage areas;
- Clean water diversion structures such as berms and ditches, that direct clean water away from an exercise yard, or manure storage;
- Any other permanent technique to keep rain and snow from becoming contaminated by manure, or adding to the volume of contaminated runoff.

Eligible Costs

Materials and labour (other than applicant's) associated with an approved project.

Ineligible Costs

- Paving of exercise yards;
- Labour and machinery use of the applicant, family dependents and the applicant's business;
- Hardening (such as with concrete or asphalt) of exercise yards, laneways and other travel routes, building floors, or any other surfaces;
- Invoices not issued in the applications name or farm business;
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.

General Comments

- Priority is given to applicants adopting new practices.
- Priority will be given to projects with strong environmental merit.

The Process

- 1 Submit an application.
- 2 UTRCA will review, and follow up with you with their decision.
- 3 If eligible, UTRCA will request field maps and project cost information. Maps must clearly identify field boundaries.
- 4 Notify UTRCA the project is complete.
- 5 UTRCA will review and ensure the project meets the requirements.
- 6 Payment will be issued.



Forestry and Tree Planting Project Guidelines

To improve water quality by planting trees and shrubs to retire fragile agricultural, plant field windbreaks or buffers along watercourses and wetlands.

Rates

Large Stock

- 50% of eligible project costs;
- Maximum Payment: \$3,000;
- Funding can be stacked with other programs up to 100% if allowed. Applicants must inform UTRCA of additional funding.

Seedlings

- 75% of eligible project costs;
- Maximum Payment: \$5,000;
- Funding can be stacked with other programs up to 100% if allowed. Applicants must inform UTRCA of additional funding.

Requirements

- Projects must be in the Upper Thames watershed.
- Landowners planting 50 trees or more on their own are eligible to apply for funding. Applicant must provide planting location, description of the tree planting project, before and after photos.

Eligible Projects

- Permanent retirement of floodplain;
- Permanent retirement of steeply sloped and erosion-prone lands;
- Buffer strips along watercourses and wetlands adjacent to either pasture or cropped land (minimum buffer width of 10 ft required);
- Field windbreaks to prevent wind erosion.

Eligible Costs

- Professional services and consulting fees;
- Purchase of native trees and shrubs;
- Contracted labour and planting costs;
- Tree protection systems and maintenance agreement costs obtained through the Conservation Authority or planting contractor;
- Establishment of cover crop used in conjunction with tree planting project.

Ineligible Costs

- Farmstead shelterbelts to protect buildings
- Landscaping for aesthetic or privacy purposes
- Labour and machinery use of applicant, family dependents, and the applicant's business
- Permits and fees
- Project must not be a legislative or legal requirement
- Commercial stock, fruit trees or Christmas tree species which are commercially marketable in less than 15 years are not eligible.
- Invoices not issued in the applications name or farm business;
- Grant will not be paid on HST if the applicant is entitled to a HST rebate.

General Comments

- Project must be approved by UTRCA prior to completion to receive funding.
- A plan is required specifying species, planting density, location, site preparation and maintenance. To promote approval, the plan should be developed in conjunction with Conservation Authority forestry staff or a private consultant.
- Proper site preparation is required for tree planting.
- The participant is responsible for the care and maintenance of tree plantings.
- Livestock must be excluded from the site.
- All trees and shrubs must be native unless strong reasoning can be provided for alternate stock.
- Applicants will be required to sign a 15 year management agreement.
- Municipal approval for tree planting along municipal drains is required.
- Conservation Authority staff should complete final inspection and ensure the project meets the requirements for funding.

The Process

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Submit an application. | 5 | Submit an expense claim form with proof of payment (e.g. copy of e-transfer, the cancelled cheque or bank statement.). |
| 2 | UTRCA will review, and follow up with you with their decision. | 6 | UTRCA will review and perform a final inspection ensuring project meets requirements. |
| 3 | Appropriate design information and drawings must be submitted to Rob Davies at daviesr@thamesriver.on.ca | 7 | Payment will be issued. |
| 4 | Notify UTRCA the project is complete. | | |

If ordering trees or shrubs with planting services through UTRCA, an application is not required unless you have applied for funding through other programs.



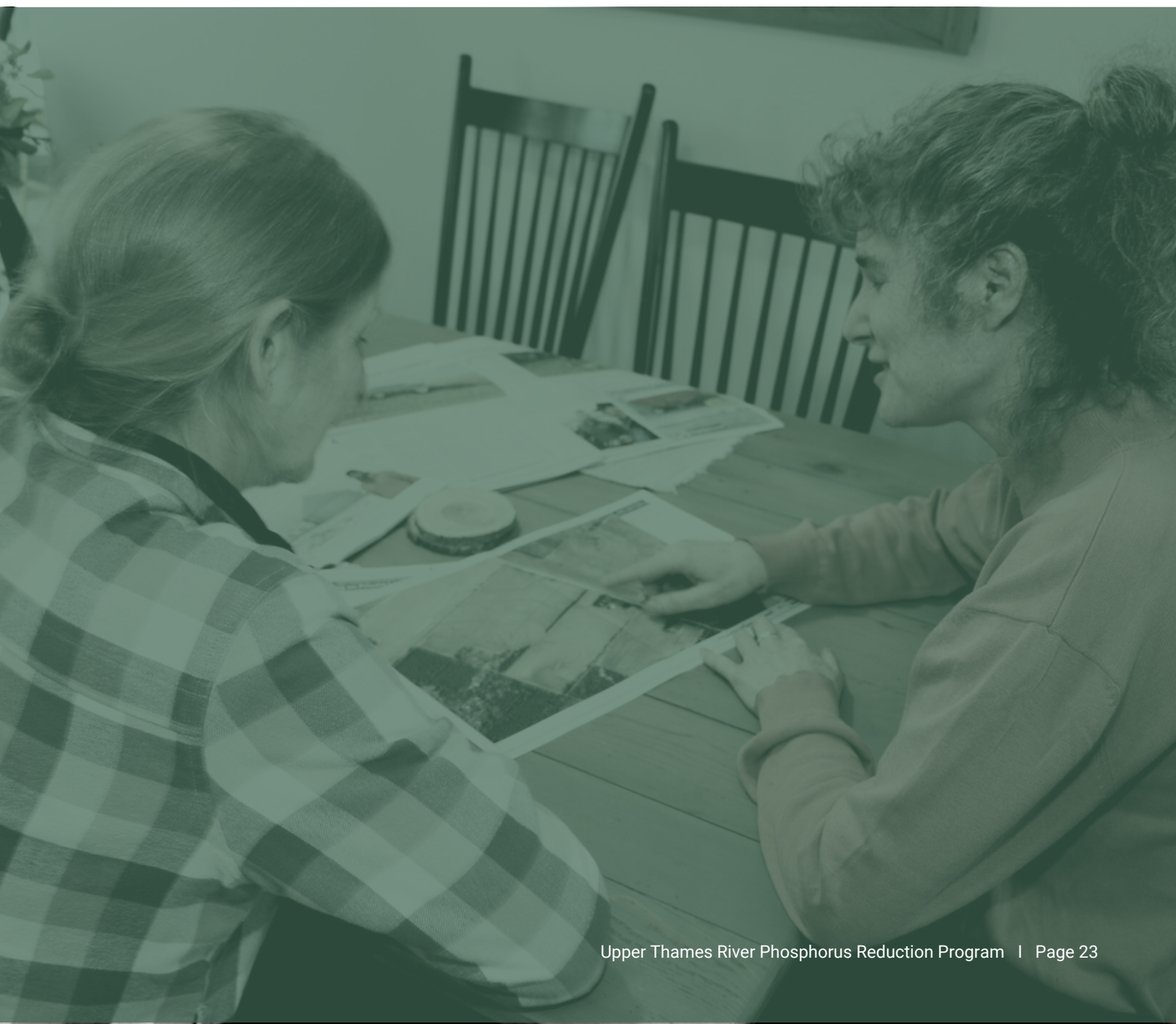
Manure Management Project Guidelines

More to come this spring 2025!



Innovative Actions Project Guidelines

We're looking for innovative project ideas that may not fit into our traditional categories for this program. If you have a creative approach to phosphorus reduction on your land, we'd love to hear about it! Let's explore how we can work together to make it happen. Contact us to discuss your idea!





UPPER THAMES RIVER
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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