



TOWN OF
CARRBORO

NORTH CAROLINA

**TRANSMITTAL
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

To: Richard White, Town Manager
Town Council

From: Emily Cochran, Stormwater Administrator
Randy Dodd, Stormwater Utility Manager

Through: Daniel Snipes, Interim Public Works Director

Date: January 11th, 2022

Subject: EPA 319 Grant Award

Summary

The purpose of this memo is to provide information regarding the 319 Grant that has been selected for funding by NCDEQ and EPA.

Information

What is an EPA 319 Grant?

Through Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency provides states with funding to reduce nonpoint source pollution. North Carolina has received \$1.2 million for competitive funding of watershed restoration projects for the current cycle. State and local governments, interstate and intrastate agencies, public and private nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions are eligible to apply for 319 funding. An interagency workgroup reviews the proposals and selects those to be funded.

What will a 319 Grant fund?

Funds may be used to conduct projects such as stormwater and agricultural best management practices and restoration of impaired streams. Section 319 grant projects must be used to help restore waterbodies currently impaired by nonpoint source pollution in areas with approved watershed restoration plans.

What does Bolin Creek watershed restoration involve?

EPA's 319 program identifies "9 elements" of a watershed restoration plan. These are

1. An information/education component
2. A monitoring component
3. Identification of the causes (stressors) and sources or groups of similar sources that need to be controlled to reduce pollution
4. Identification of the needed restoration measures.
5. An assessment of the improvements associated with the chosen actions
6. Criteria used to determine whether substantial restoration progress is being made
7. An assessment of the resources (technical, financial) needed and authorities that will be relied upon, to implement the plan.

8. A longer term implementation plan and schedule
9. Identification of interim, measurable milestones to track progress in achieving restoration goals.

The Bolin Creek Watershed Restoration Plan (2012) was directed by these 9 elements and provides a comprehensive framework for restoration work. In addition, 319 funding heavily relies on “measurable results” of improvements. This involves water quality/water resources based metrics.

What is proposed in the application?

The purpose of the project is to stabilize soils and an eroding gully in a small catchment draining three adjoining neighborhoods both for its inherent importance and as a highly relevant demonstration for broader watershed restoration efforts. This project would restore approximately 700 linear feet of an ephemeral channel and treat stormwater runoff from 11 acres in the Bolin Creek watershed right at the upstream extent of where Bolin Creek is recognized as an impaired stream. The ephemeral channel directly conveys untreated stormwater from adjacent properties into Bolin Creek. The project area includes land owned by three homeowner’s associations (Phase 2 Bolin Forest HOA, Phase 3 Bolin Forest HOA and Forest Court HOA) and an easement of the Orange Water and Sewer Authority (OWASA). Preliminary design work has been completed/sponsored by the Bolin Forest Phase II and III HOAs and reviewed by all project partners.

This project will be a very important demonstration not only of a creative and effective technical solution for this setting, but of the critical importance of the public/private/nonprofit partnerships needed to address erosion and sediment delivery in small residential catchments and along headwater and ephemeral streams. Partners include the homeowner’s associations, Orange Water and Sewer Authority, Orange County, the Friends of Bolin Creek, the NC Cooperative Extension Service, UNC, the local school system, and the Town of Carrboro. There will be extensive volunteer work and publicity and outreach to fully leverage the grant funds. Land use in the Bolin Creek watershed, and especially in the upper Bolin Creek watershed, is dominated by single family residential neighborhoods, and geomorphic instability is a driver of water quality concerns. Considerable attention will be given to sharing solutions with other residents and neighborhoods in the Bolin Creek watershed. Outreach products will also be created that will be broadly applicable for other communities and watersheds.

Why was this project recommended?

This project was recommended because, in staff opinion: it presents a positive step towards watershed restoration; it will be of benefit to the neighborhoods and residents; it is a good example of what can be accomplished through a broad collaboration; and it promises to have community and watershed wide benefits.

What are the match requirements?

All projects must include non-federal matching funds of at least 40% of the project's total costs. For this effort, the match is proposed to be met mostly through in kind from all the project participants, but with some cash match from the HOAs and neighborhood residents.

What has occurred to date?

The grant application was submitted in May 2021 with a follow-up interview occurring in June. NCDEQ suggested that the Town apply for additional funds, so a final application was submitted in July. In October 2021, the Town was notified that the application was selected for award, and in November the Town received the contract documents from NCDEQ and EPA. Staff began administrative steps and held a community meeting in December to update neighbors on the grant status. Additionally, the neighborhood applied for a grant through the Orange County Soil and Water Conservation District for additional funds related to the planting of native vegetation in the area; selection for this grant is pending.

What is the grant schedule?

- January 2022 – Accept grant award, finish administrative steps, execute agreements
- Early 2022 – finish design and engineering work
- 2nd Quarter 2022 – begin construction and community workshops/education
- 3rd Quarter 2022 – finish construction
- 4th Quarter 2022 – begin planting
- 4th Quarter 2023 – additional planting, conclude workshops/education

Additional information about the grant opportunity, including the RFP, application, and review criteria is available at <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/planning/nonpoint-source-management/319-grant-program#2021-319-grant-application-materials>. Additional information about the Bolin Creek watershed restoration effort is available at <https://www.townofcarrboro.org/280/Bolin-Creek-Watershed-Restoration>

Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Council adopt the ordinance authorizing the Town Manager to accept the grant award and execute related documents.