



Tennessee Conservation Grant Program

2021 Program Summary

Deadlines

By or before:

- **March 15:** Notice sent to chapters about grant program.
- **June 30:** Status reports due for grants from previous years.
- **July 1:** Grant applications submitted to the grant committee chair.
- **July 15:** Grant applications distributed to committee for review and scoring.
- **August 7:** Grant committee meets to make its decisions. Decisions will be communicated to applicants before the summer council meeting.
- **September 30:** Grant checks are distributed, except where funds are withheld awaiting fulfillment of a contingency.

Grant Program Description

The goal of the Tennessee Council of Trout Unlimited (TCTU) Tennessee Conservation Grant Program (TCGP) is to support TCTU's mission of coldwater conservation in Tennessee. The grant program encourages partnerships and joint ventures where the local chapter serves as the primary coordinator. Projects should support the goals of TU's conservation model.

1. Protect (public lands policy, land trust partnerships, defense from unwise development, etc.)
2. Reconnect (in-stream flow enhancement, water law advocacy – surface or groundwater, etc.)
3. Restore (native fish restoration, watershed and habitat restoration projects, policy to provide restoration incentives and funding, improved hatchery design, private landowner stewardship recognition, etc.)
4. Sustain (youth education, Trout in the Classroom, coalition building, chapter strengthening, etc.)

Examples of Appropriate Grant Projects

- Riverbank, stream edge and/or trails development and similar capital projects related to enhancement of the natural environment. This may include project proposals for the assemblage of lands, expanded natural areas, greenways, or the creation of public access.
- Restoration of Southern Appalachian Brook Trout to their historic waters.
- Proposals may include kiosks, displays, marketing, and other communications programs that promote clean water policies and fisheries conservation.
- Public involvement is encouraged and local chapters may propose projects that enhance communities with cleanup efforts, interpretive signage, riparian plantings, or stream restoration as well as education venues and student learning modules. Projects that demonstrate new technologies and best management practices for improved grant quality are also encouraged.

Award Levels

Typical awards will be up to \$10,000 for a project lasting one year, but any amount or project length will be considered.

These grants do not require a percentage match. However, the chapter applicant is encouraged to match with an equal amount of contributions, donations, in-kind services, and/or volunteer labor in order to leverage the most total funds per project, and grant applications should include this information. TCGP funds may also be used to apply for matching grants from TU National.

TCTU Conservation Grant Committee

Every Tennessee chapter in good standing may nominate one representative to serve on the TCTU Conservation Grant Committee (the committee). The committee should consist of at least four members plus the committee chair and vice chair. Members nominated by chapters should have prior knowledge of coldwater resources in Tennessee, our management agencies, and our partners, and may not belong to the TCTU Executive Committee (however, as with all council committees, the council chair is a voting member of the grant committee). Committee members nominated by their chapters serve unlimited terms at the pleasure of their chapters.

The grant committee chair should have at least one year's experience on the grant committee. As with other TCTU committees, the grant committee chair is appointed by the TCTU Council chair with the approval of the executive committee. The grant committee chair serves a two-year term in that office, and may be reappointed to a second term, but cannot serve more than two consecutive terms as chair. The grant committee vice chair is elected by the grant committee members from among their ranks, and serves a two-year term. The vice chair may be reelected to a second term, but cannot serve more than two consecutive terms as vice chair. Both chair and vice chair participate in scoring and voting on grant applications.

The grant committee chair communicates the grant process and deadlines to the chapters, receives proposals, convenes and chairs the annual grant review meeting, presents the committee decisions to the council, and compiles yearly reports. The vice chair distributes proposals to the committee and compiles members' scores for each proposal.

The committee may award, reduce, increase, or deny any grant application. No committee members may score or vote on proposals from their own chapters.

Tennessee Conservation Grant Process Modifications

The TCGP process should be reviewed at fall council meetings. Process modifications will not be made mid-cycle of the grant process without council approval. Any modification made to the process will apply to the grant cycle beginning the following March 15.

Application Requirements and Process

Eligibility

A Tennessee chapter in good standing or the TCTU Executive Committee must be the grant applicant. Chapters may apply jointly for a project, and may also include partnering agencies and/or organizations. The applicant must show significant involvement in the planning and execution of the project to warrant funding. Local, state, and federal land managing agencies are eligible as partners as well as nonprofit organizations with 501(c)(3) status or any agency with which the applicant chapter or council has a relationship. The TCGP does not fund projects tied to political campaigns, and will not make grants to individuals or non-TU projects.

Any chapter applying for funds for a project in another chapter's membership area (within the ZIP codes allocated to each specific chapter) should communicate and coordinate with that chapter.

Grant Cycle Timeline

An announcement of the yearly grant cycle will be sent to all Tennessee chapters no later than March 15 each year. This announcement will include a summary of the program and its timeline, with a copy of the program guidelines, application form, and scoring matrix.

Tennessee Conservation Grant Program applications must be submitted to the grant committee chair by July 1 of the grant cycle. Applications may be delivered by the following means; physical as well as electronic addresses are available on the TCTU website, <http://tctu.org>.

1. Regular mail postmarked by end of the last business day of June (5 p.m. Eastern time)
2. Email forwarded by the end of the last business day of June (5 p.m. Eastern time)
3. Delivered in person to the grant committee chair by the end of the last business day of June (with advance notice of intent to apply).

The grant committee chair will acknowledge receipt of the grant application within three business days of receipt. Applications submitted after the deadlines listed above will be ineligible and will be returned to the applicant.

The council treasurer will communicate to the grant committee how much money is available for awards. By July 15, applications will be distributed to committee members for consideration and scoring. The grant committee will convene no later than August 7 each grant cycle to make its decisions. Applicants will be notified of decisions prior to the summer council meeting.

The grant committee chair will present the awarding decisions at the summer council meeting.

As a guideline, only one project per applicant will be funded by TCGP during a single grant cycle. Awarding of multiple projects to a single applicant within a single grant cycle will require executive committee approval.

Grant Application Evaluation

An approved scoring matrix will be used to evaluate all submitted proposals. Each committee member will independently score every proposal. Committee members will recuse themselves from evaluating or voting on their home chapters' proposals. A proposal's final score will be the average of the individual scores. Proposals will be ranked and awarded from highest score to lowest score and available funds will be allocated based on those rankings.

Grant Reporting

Project summaries for prior grant cycle awards must be submitted to the grant committee chair by the last business day of June, by the same means as new grant applications above. Generally projects should be completed before the start of the next grant cycle. If circumstances due to weather or other unforeseen occurrences are involved, the chapter may request extension of a grant from the committee, providing written documentation of reasons for the delay; updates on extended projects should be provided at each quarterly council meeting until completion. New chapter grant applications will not be accepted if a prior-year grant project summary or extension request has not been received.

The committee chair and the TCTU Council Executive Committee will work together to produce and distribute a yearly press release on the previous year's projects and the impact of the sales of

the Conservation License Plate. The aim is to have the press release published in print and digital media across the state to promote the license plate and the grant program.

Distribution of Funds

Grant recipients will receive funds through a disbursement process established by the council. Checks will be distributed by September 30, except when funds are withheld awaiting fulfillment of a contingency.

TCGP grant funds must be spent on actual project costs that are accountable in terms of services, materials, equipment, research, etc. (i.e. grant funds should not be used to pay for volunteer labor or for salary of a “volunteer” project coordinator).

Unexpended project funds must be returned to the TCGP at the conclusion of the project.