

Water Quality Positions for FY 2016 Pending Clean Water Fund

POSITION	PAY GRADE
Water Quality Permitting and Project Manager	27
Water Quality Specialist – small farm inspector	23
Water Quality Specialist – small farm inspector	23
Agriculture Systems Specialist – Ag Engineer	23
Financial Administrator II	23
GIS Project Supervisor	24
Sr. Ag Development Coordinator – Communications	25

Newly Proposed Classified Positions Pending a Clean Water Fund

Water Quality Permitting and Project Manager – Grade 27

The Agency currently issues permits to medium and large farm operations. Under the proposed EPA TMDL the agency is expected to create a small farm certification program (5,000+ farms will likely fall under this). This position will assist in the development of the small farm program and align all three farm programs so farms can seamlessly transition from one to the next should they choose to expand. This work will include creating the program, contracting to develop an online registration system for farms to view the permits/certifications, and training for all stakeholders. Additionally, this position will inspect farms for compliance.

Water Quality Specialist – Small Farm Inspector – Grade 23 two positions

Currently the inspection capabilities within the agency are insufficient to adequately enforce the current regulations, let alone the proposed changes the State has put forth in the EPA TMDL. These two positions will enhance our ability to be present on farms in order to uphold the regulations. Right now the farm to staff ratio is roughly 715 farms per person. (assumptions include: 1,000 dairies and 4,000 other livestock/backyard farms/crop farms, etc., and 7 FTE's for inspectors).

Agriculture Systems Specialist - Ag Engineer – Grade 23

As inspectors do their job, they inevitably drive workload onto engineering resources as farms need to make improvements in order to maintain compliance with water quality regulations. If the inspectors above are to be hired, a professional certified engineering position is essential in order to complete the progression of getting a farm to resolve water quality issues.

Financial Administrator II – Grade 23

Included in the additional clean water fund budget proposal is an increase in base allocations for programs. Most of these programs are pass-through grants administered by the Agency to partner organizations. If the funds are increased, a position will be needed to administer the grants in the ARMS division and any new initiatives and cooperative agreements the agency enters into.

GIS Project Supervisor – Grade 24

As the Agency performs all of the work in the TMDL, there is a need to show accountability of the progress made. Showing maps is one of the most effective ways to present this information to the public, especially in a natural resource field such as agriculture which is land based. Additionally, the ARM division is about to embark on a new water quality database that will track all of the permitting efforts and this position will ensure a linkage in the permit mapping as well so internal resources can be more efficient in the enforcement process by knowing where farms are situated and the resources they have at their disposal (i.e. Additional manure pits so we don't have to issue them a spreading exemption in the winter which improves water quality or an understanding of who owns land when a complaint comes in and a more immediate ability to contact the farmer to resolve the issue).

Senior Ag Development Coordinator – Communications and Marketing – Grade 25

As the Agency increases its presence in water quality regulations and work with famers, communication of efforts as well as a marketing assistance program will become paramount. This position will work with the Water Quality Specialists, Water Quality Permitting and Project Manager and Ag Resource Management Assistant Director to provide current information on water quality efforts, enforcement actions and programs that can assist farmers to meet water quality goals of the state.

TMDL Funding – Fertilizer fee and Impervious surface fee

Fertilizer Fee	Staff and operating	Grants	TOTAL
\$30/ton = \$1.2 million estimated into Special Fund in Agriculture	\$952,000 – 7 positions, benefits, travel, fleet, computers, phones etc.	\$248,000 – grants to assist farmers to meet WQ requirements	\$1,200,000
Clean Water Fund – impervious surface impact payment – special fund in administration		\$642,000 estimated to ag for water quality grants	\$ 642,000
TOTAL	\$952,000	\$890,000	\$1,842,000

Agency of Agriculture Budget for Water Quality - requested

Category	General Fund	Special Fund	Inter-Departmental Transfer	Federal Funds	Capital Funds	TOTAL
Staff Salary, Benefits and operating - current 12 – requesting funding for 1= 13	\$711,463	\$428,734 – Feed, seed and fertilizer and pesticide program fees	\$109,745 – 319 Funds from DEC	\$61,218		\$2,454,688
Other Personal Services – insurance and contracts	\$69,700	\$86,506 – Feed, Seed and Fertilizer and pesticide fees and special grant (NEIWPPCC)		\$80,000		\$ 236,206
Grants	\$569,544 NMP, FAP, NRCC		\$40,423 – 319 Funds from DEC	\$453,113 – Certainty Enhancement, NRCS CIG National and State	\$1,400,000 BMP	\$2,463,080
TOTAL	\$1,350,707	\$ 515,240	\$ 150,168	\$ 594,331	\$1,400,000	\$4,010,446

USDA NRCS/Vermont State Funding Summary January, 2015

Lake Champlain Funding Sources	Lake Champlain Initiative Announced by Vilsack	RCPP National – Lake Champlain – Ag, Forestry, Conservation Easements and Wetlands Restoration	RCPP State – Nutrient Management Planning	CT River RCPP	Remainder of State
Lead Project Partner	Funded through NRCS Programs using typical process in consultation with State Technical Committee	Vermont Agency of Agriculture and Agency of Natural Resources	Vermont Association of Conservation Districts	CT Conservation Districts	NRCS & VAAFM
Total Funds Available	\$45 Million over five years all FA directly to farmers	\$16 Million (FA and TA) Note: 10% of the EQIP funds will be targeted to New York	\$710,980 - 800,000 (FA and TA)	\$10 M over five years – TBD how much in VT	Approx. \$2.4M/year NRCS \$1.9M/year VAAFM
Time Frame	FY 2015 - 2019	FY 2015 - 2019	FY 2015 - 2018	FY 2015-2019	Base Funding-Ongoing
Programs	EQIP only – \$9M/year solely for Lake Champlain Basin	EQIP – 1.5M/year ACEP-ALE – 750,000 - \$1M/year ACEP- WRE – 250,000/year	EQIP – about \$175,000/yr	EQIP and ACEP-ALE	EQIP, ACEP-ALE, ACEP-WRE, BMP, FAP, NMP
Primary Practices	All water quality practices including waste management, infrastructure, field agronomic practices, forestry, and wetlands	Cropland – All Agronomic Practices, with limited focus on Farmsteads; Feed Management; Forestry – Forest Trails and Landings, Stream Crossings, Skidder Bridges	Collection of Data Needed to Develop Land Treatment and Nutrient Management Plans	TBD	All water quality and conservation practices
Restrictions		Funds cannot be used for admin or outreach Requires substantial match including: VHCB – \$840,000/year DEC - \$389,500/year (staff, lab, wetlands contractor) AAFM - \$1,998,294/year (staff, FAP, BMP \$)			
Priority Locations	FY 2015 – basin wide, but with priorities for Missisquoi, St. Albans Bay, and South Lake FY 2016 – basin wide, but will prioritize Rock River, Lake Carmi/Pike River, St. Albans Bay, and Mackenzie Brook Future will coordinate with DEC Tactical Basin Planning process	Small Farms in the Missisquoi Bay, St. Albans Bay, and South Lake watersheds (both VT and NY); Critical Source Areas will be prioritized in those three priority basins Feed Management, forestry and wetlands restoration – basin wide, Land Conservation - Lake Champlain basin	Lake Champlain, with an option to expand beyond the watershed Small farm nutrient management planning in coordination with UVM Extension NMP development class.	TBD	Statewide

USDA NRCS/Vermont State Funding Summary January, 2015

Estimated Number of Participants NOTE - RCPP Numbers Subject to Change due to reduced funding	On average – 300 participants/year in the Lake Champlain watershed	Total Estimated Small Farms – 120-140 Forestry – 100 Wetland Restoration – 20-30 Conservation Easements - 35	Small Farms - 40 per year for a total of 160	TBD	TBD
Priority Resource Concern	Water Quality	Water Quality, Land Conservation	Water Quality	Water Quality, Land Conservation	Water Quality, Land Conservation

Total Funds Available for Lake Champlain Agricultural Practices

Program	Total Commitment	Annual Allocation directly to farmers
NRCS	\$45,000,000	\$9,000,000
RCPP – State of Vermont – EQIP	\$6,356,000	\$1,589,000
RCPP – State of Vermont – ACEP-ALE	\$4,000,000	\$1,000,000 first year, \$750,000 following years
RCPP – State of Vermont – ACEP-WRE	\$750,000	\$187,500
RCPP – VACD – Nutrient Management Plans	\$800,000	Approx. \$175,000
VT Agency of Agriculture – BMP funds		\$1,400,000
VT Agency of Agriculture – FAP/NMP funds		\$569,544
Total		\$13.9M/year average

Acronyms

RCPP – Regional Conservation Partnership Program

EQIP – Environmental Quality Incentives Program - Field practices, barnyard improvement, waste management

ACEP-ALE – Agricultural Conservation Easement Program/Ag land easement

FA – financial assistance – payments directly to farmers for projects

VACD – VT Association of Conservation District

FAP – Farm Agronomic Practices

NRCS – Natural Resources Conservation Service

ACEP – WRE – Wetlands Restoration Easements

TA – technical assistance – people to help design, implement projects for farmers

BMP – Best management practices

NMP – Nutrient Management Plans.