

A User's Guide to the Lake Anasagunticook Watershed Protection Project, Phase II

We'll start with some questions and answers...

Q: Who was the grant awarded to?

A: Oxford County Soil & Water Conservation District (OCSWCD).

Q: What does the grant do?

A: The grant provides matching funds to pay for projects that address soil erosion at town and private roads, driveways, boat ramps, paths, and residential areas within the Lake Anasagunticook Watershed, plus engineering and public education.

Q: What's the purpose of the project?

A: To reduce erosion that enters Lake Anasagunticook.

Q: Why is this important?

A: Lake Anasagunticook is at risk. Overall water quality is considered slightly below average for Maine lakes by Lake Stewards of Maine. It is listed on the Maine DEP's priority watersheds list as a "threatened lake" due to being a public drinking water source. Water chemistry and past history indicate the lake is vulnerable to algae blooms. Reducing erosion will improve water quality, wildlife habitat and recreational enjoyment. Clean and healthy lakes benefit landowners and the towns by providing quality drinking water, and by supporting property values and businesses that depend on clean water.

Q: How much money is involved?

A: The grant award is \$51,655. Local match is \$34,444. TOTAL PROJECT (grant + match) = \$86,099.

Q: Why is this project considered "Phase II"?

A: The erosion control project that was conducted from 2000-02 is considered Phase I. While this current project addresses many of the highest priority sites that were identified in the 2019 watershed survey, it is anticipated a 3rd phase will be needed to tackle the remaining high and medium priority erosion sites + new problems that may arise in coming years.

Q: Who provides the local match?

A: The partners provide match, cash and/or in-kind funds, as specified in the letters of commitment to the grant application, and in the grant work plan.

Q: When did the project begin?

A: It started January 1, 2021.

Q: How long does it go?

A: This is a 2-year project.

Okay, those are the basics. But how **SPECIFICALLY** will the project reduce Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS), otherwise known as erosion? There are 3 strategies. They are:

- 1) The project will share the cost of fixing at least 14 large erosion problems with the towns and private property owners;
- 2) Free technical assistance will be provided to at least 15 parties to help them fix erosion problems. No cost-sharing money is involved;
- 3) Cost-sharing through smaller Residential Matching Grants will be awarded to assist at least 5 residential owners to reduce erosion around their homes.

The project aims to reduce the amount of erosion that enters Lake Anasagunticook by 50 tons/year. This will go a long way toward keeping Lake Anasagunticook healthy!

Let's take a closer look at each of these strategies...

1) Cost-sharing to fix at least 14 large erosion problems

The grant will split the cost to fix large erosion problems 50-50 with partners. In addition, the grant provides funds to pay for an engineer to design erosion control plans for complicated sites.

Here's how it works: Let's say there is a large, devilish erosion problem on XYZ Road. The grant pays for the engineering design to fix it. For this example, it is determined that it will cost \$4,000 to implement the design. The grant pays \$2,000 and the partner pays \$2,000. *(Remember...the partner portion can be cash, contributed labor, supplies, and equipment, or any combination thereof!)* Full costs must be paid by the cooperating partner and then the cost-share is reimbursed to them after construction is complete.

Priority "candidate" sites were listed as an attachment to the grant application. But this list isn't written in stone...it may change depending on field conditions.

2) Technical assistance provided to at least 15 parties to advise them on erosion control

The grant pays the cost for staff to consult with interested landowners who **request** advice on how to control an erosion problem.

Technical assistance consultations involve a site visit followed by a written report summarizing the recommended steps that are needed to reduce erosion on the property. It's a great, **FREE** service! Naturally, we hope recipients of technical assistance will then go ahead and implement the recommendations (but they are not required to)!

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3) Residential Conservation Cost-sharing to at least 5 residential owners

One thing we discovered during the 2019 watershed survey was that there are a lot of residential properties that contribute small amounts of erosion to Lake Anasagunticook. In fact, “residential” was the second largest land use category of all sites found. Individually, these sites may not have much erosion but their cumulative impact can be significant.

That’s why we incorporated Residential Matching Grants into the project. The grant pays up to \$350 to property owners who are willing to match that amount with their own \$350 contribution – cash, volunteer labor, donated supplies and/or equipment. We figure \$700 should be enough to fix most small residential erosion problems.

Nobody’s pointing fingers...it’s simply a matter of being aware of problems and fixing them when they arise!

Role of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee consists of representatives from OCSWCD, the Androscoggin River Watershed Council (ARWC), Lake Anasagunticook Association (LAA), Towns of Canton and Hartford, Pine Shores Subdivision, other watershed residents, and Maine DEP. It will meet at least twice (once a year) during the 2-year life of the grant. The steering committee keeps the project “grounded” and helps decide where to allocate funds.

A word about Education & Outreach...

This grant includes activities designed to achieve the maximum amount of public participation possible.

Education & Outreach includes:

- Project updates at the 2021 & 2022 annual meetings of the LAA;
- At least 1 meeting with the Canton & Hartford Select Boards, each, in order to keep them up to date on project activities and accomplishments;
- Mailings (“snail” and/or email) to watershed residents advertising the availability of technical assistance and Residential Matching Grants;
- Press releases and web postings on the OCSWCD, LAA, town, and ARWC websites, as well as the LAA Facebook page to discuss project progress;
- Two hands-on workshops. One will showcase proper camp road maintenance, and the other will show how to conduct a buffer planting;
- A “house meeting” to discuss barriers and solutions for implementing erosion control measures at residential properties;
- At the end of the grant, publication and distribution of a brochure that shows “before” and “after” photos of erosion control work done during the project and discusses stewardship of Lake Anasagunticook into the future.

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Grant Work Plan Tasks...

For those of you who like to get “in the weeds” about these things, here is how the grant is structured. These are the actual tasks as listed in the grant work plan. OCSWCD and ARWC are responsible for carrying out these tasks to completion.

Task 1 – Project Administration

Contracts, reporting... and all the other administrative stuff!

Task 2 – Steering Committee

The steering committee will guide project activities, as described above.

Task 3 – NPS Abatement Projects

NPS = erosion. These are the big erosion control projects, as described above, that will take place to minimize erosion on town and private roads, paths, private properties and boat ramps. There will be at least 14 of these projects.

Task 4 – Technical Assistance

As described above, there will be at least 15 of these technical assistance consultations.

Task 5 – Residential Matching Grants

There will be at least 5 of these during the 2-year life of the grant.

Task 6 – Education & Outreach

The multiple facets of this task were listed above.

Task 7 – Pollutant Load Reduction Estimates

Project staff (OCSWCD and ARWC) are responsible for estimating erosion control benefits accrued by the completed NPS projects. For instance, taking the example of XYZ Road on page 2, we will need to measure how much soil erosion has been kept out of the lake by fixing this problem. Pollutant load reductions have already been calculated for most of the NPS sites on the “candidate” site list.

That’s it in a nutshell. Remember...the *Lake Anasagunticook Watershed Protection Project, Phase II* – like the watershed survey that preceded it – is a voluntary, non-regulatory effort of the ENTIRE community. It’s all about cooperation...working together to protect the special resources of the Lake Anasagunticook Watershed!

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