

**NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY REGIONAL HABITAT RESTORATION STRATEGY
SUBMISSION OF PROJECT TASKS AND PROPOSED BUDGET TO THE
ECOLOGICAL STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 21, 2011

Prepared for:



**NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY COMMISSION
Ecological Standing Committee**

Prepared by:

BUFFALO NIAGARA RIVERKEEPER



January 21, 2011

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Mr. Timothy T. DePriest
Chairman, Greenway Ecological Standing Committee
c/o New York Department of Environmental Conservation/Natural Heritage Trust
270 Michigan Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14203

Re: Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy

Dear Mr. DePriest:

Please accept the enclosed application entitled "*Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy*," which is being submitted on behalf of Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and our project partners.

Over the last year and a half, this proposal has been developed, refined, and updated in order to address the region's need for a comprehensive habitat restoration strategy. It also attempts to maximize opportunities for cost-share; integrate work with parallel efforts; and, ultimately, result in the production of a high-quality, dynamic strategy that can be universally applied in order to benefit the ecology and community within the Niagara region.

This proposed project has received a "consistency" determination twice by the Greenway Commission. The enclosed text includes a summary review of the proposed tasks, outputs, benefits, and budget. The more detailed Greenway Commission application for consistency is included as Appendix A.

We look forward to the opportunity to present this project and meet with members of the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee. We are available to respond to any questions or suggestions that the Committee may have. I can be reached directly at 716/852-7483, ext. 21, or by e-mail at jedlicka@bnriverkeeper.org.

Sincerely,

Jill Spisiak Jedlicka
Director, Ecological Programs

cc: Steve Schoenwiener, NYPA

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NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY REGIONAL HABITAT RESTORATION STRATEGY: SUBMISSION OF PROJECT TASKS AND PROPOSED BUDGET TO THE ECOLOGICAL STANDING COMMITTEE

BACKGROUND

The Niagara River Greenway Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy (Regional Restoration Strategy) has been granted consistency twice by the Niagara River Greenway Commission, most recently on the re-submitted (and current) form of the project in November 2010. The attached Appendix A contains a full copy of the re-submitted application (dated September 21, 2010). It provides detail on the project applicant (Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper) and the overall elements, approach, and benefits associated with the re-submitted proposal. Other characteristic elements of Niagara River Greenway applications, which are provided in Appendix A, include:

- Evidence of Consultation;
- Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Plan;
- Description of Project Consistency with the Niagara River Greenway;
- Plan Description of Project Consistency with State and Federal Laws and Regulations;
- Description of Efforts/Opportunities for Matching Funds;
- Limitations on Use of Greenway Funds; and
- Description of Current and Proposed Project Area Land Ownership.

Please refer to the re-submitted application for any of the information listed above.

The following text provides a summary of the project tasks for the Regional Restoration Strategy. This application and the tasks provided herein include the entire Greenway boundary (see Figure 1). Figure 1 also provides the limits of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI)-funded project. For each task presented below, we have included a summary description of the work to be performed, a list of the outputs and benefits, and detailed information supporting the proposed task budgets. The following description provides an updated summary of the “Proposed Tasks, Outputs, Benefits, and Costs for Phase I.”

The information provided below also represents a recent evaluation of task budgets in light of the work that is being conducted under the Healthy Niagara project, further examination of cost-sharing opportunities with the GLRI project (see Appendix A for a summary description), and “lessons learned” over the past 12 months associated with the work being conducted for the Buffalo River Ecological Restoration Master Plan (ERMP). The latter project, which is currently being funded by the Great Lakes National Program Office, provides the Technical Team with recent experience in preparing the ERMP, which is similar in vision and scope to the Regional Restoration Strategy.

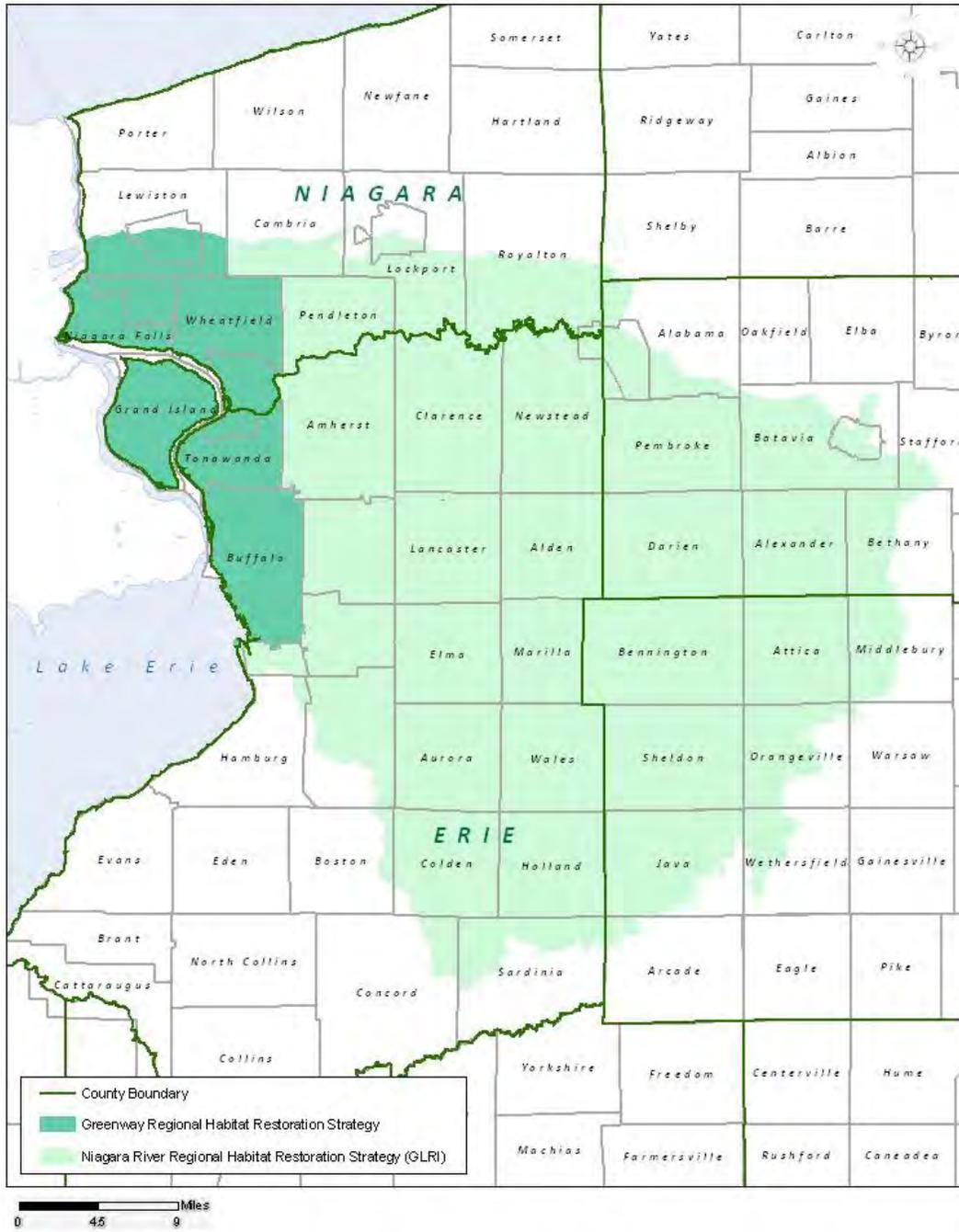


Figure 1: PROJECT AREA

PROPOSED TASKS, OUTPUTS, BENEFITS, AND COSTS FOR PHASE I

Task 1: Habitat Strategy Coordination

This project will support in part the Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Coordinator (Coordinator) for a two-year period. The funds requested for this task include all project management responsibilities including grant and budget management, regional coordination of stakeholders and partners, project outreach, and overseeing the technical teams for this (NYPA funded) portion of the project. The Coordination responsibilities also include integration of this project with the parallel GLRI funded portion that will also be managed by Riverkeeper over the course of the two years. The budget for this task also includes fringe (10% rate) and overhead costs (23%).

Outputs:

- ✓ Regional Habitat Coordinator and Complete Project Management and Oversight

Benefits:

- ✓ Funding of position and for the overall coordination and management of the Strategy leverages federal funding opportunity through GLRI and provides integration of two efforts and focused management for developing and implementing Strategy

Task Budget: \$100,524

Task 2: Outreach Support for Stakeholder Collaboration

The Technical Team will support the efforts to involve stakeholders in refining project scope, setting goals, determining assessment, project categorization, and monitoring protocol; and reviewing and commenting on the Strategy. It is expected that there will be 12 meetings during Phase I with regional stakeholders and 12 planning meetings between the Coordinator and the Technical Team

Outputs:

- ✓ Supports focused and coordinated efforts for collaboration for habitat restoration across the Niagara River Greenway (and Niagara River watershed).
- ✓ Provides continued feedback system between Technical Team, Coordinator, and stakeholders for organization and presentation of ideas and information.

Benefits:

- ✓ Planning and implementation strategy that synthesizes input from across the Niagara River Greenway (and remainder of the Niagara River watershed via the GLRI project).
- ✓ Integration of Technical Team with stakeholder outreach process.

Task Budget: \$20,992

- Costs are predominantly labor (97%); includes 159 labor hours.
- Assumes total of 900 miles of travel; average of 50 miles round trip (RT) for stakeholder meetings, and 25 miles RT for meetings between Technical Team and Coordinator.
- Technical Disciplines include senior scientist, junior scientist, and geographic information system (GIS) analyst; the two former disciplines will split attendance of meetings; GIS involvement assumes 40 hours for request of maps over course of Phase I. Assume 4 hours total for each stakeholder meeting (including travel), and 3 hours total for each Technical Team—Coordinator meeting (including travel).

Task 3: Data Acquisition in Greenway Boundary

This task will support the population of a watershed-wide database. The GIS database for the entire Niagara River watershed is being funded through the GLRI grant that was awarded by the Great Lakes National Program Office to Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper. The activities completed for this task will complement the efforts being funded by the GLRI funded portion of the project by acquiring data and creating datasets of important information within the Greenway Boundary to support the mapping, quantification, and evaluation of environmental data. The Technical Team recognizes that the Healthy Niagara project has been developing datasets within the study area. The Technical Team has been involved in a number of projects within the area and will be able to integrate data gathered previously into this process. This project will utilize those data previously collected and organized into a GIS; the datasets that are available are noted below. This “data mining” effort will:

- Determine what datasets currently available and germane to the project.
- Collect/acquire data to fill any gaps.
- Update datasets to ensure most current vintage of datasets.

Examples of dataset creation for the Greenway include (but may not be limited to) the following:

- Niagara and Erie County parcel mapping;
- Property code classifications;
- Wetlands (state and federal wetland data have already been obtained through the Healthy Niagara project);
- Floodplains;
- Available threatened and endangered species information (this information has already been obtained through the Healthy Niagara project);
- Water quality data (this information has already been obtained through the Healthy Niagara project);
- BUI recommendation strategies, delisting criteria, and recommendations;
- Flood and hydraulic studies;
- Existing restoration programs/plans/projects;
- Land use/land cover (2004 LU/LC information has already been obtained through the Healthy Niagara project);
- Brownfields;
- Hazardous waste sites;
- Combined sewer overflows (CSOs);
- Local comprehensive land use and master plans (Healthy Niagara project has developed a listing municipal based plans within the Greenway);
- Sediment investigation or monitoring studies;
- US Geological Survey (USGS) stream gauge information;
- Prime farmland soils;
- Highly erodible soils; and
- Hydric soils.

Other types of information could include local conservation plans, Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans, greenway plans, etc.

Outputs:

- ✓ In-depth electronic, standardized, and geo-related library of environmental, hydrologic, biological, and ecological (etc.) information to support the identification and evaluation of potential habitat restoration sites.

Benefits:

- ✓ Completes dataset creation that provides quantitative and analytical tool for use in the remainder of the habitat restoration planning process.
- ✓ Supports the completion of the relational database being created through GLRI funding.
- ✓ Makes accessible information collected and organized to other stakeholders for their use in the future.

Task Budget: \$35,013

- Costs are predominantly labor (99%); includes 341 labor hours.
- Assumes total of 90 miles of travel for meetings for coordination with GLRI database construction team.
- Technical Disciplines principally involve GIS analysts, but also include senior scientist (for oversight and coordination), and two levels of junior scientists to support data acquisition/report review process.

Task 4: Quantification and Analysis of Regional Data to Determine Restoration Needs

Simply put, this task is about what is done with data and information once it is collected. This task will use desktop GIS to synthesize and analyze the GIS data collected in Task 3. This task supports interpretive analysis and decision making through the use of GIS operations such as spatial queries, overlays, and layer intersections. The process will involve assessing, characterizing, and quantifying existing environmental information within the Greenway boundary. The project will also refine regional, watershed, sub-watershed, and restoration needs, with participation by partners and stakeholders including riparian landowners. The results of the analysis conducted in this task will support Task 5.

Outputs:

- ✓ New and current value-added spatial datasets that will provide data driven decision making across landscape (i.e., within Greenway boundary).
- ✓ Centralized and accessible datasets for regional mapping and environmental data.

Examples of specific outputs are likely to include: query for parcel ownership information with an output of where publically owned parcels occur; query for 2011 DFIRM mapping with the output of public parcels within the 100-year floodplain; and query for waterfront parcels with an output of calculations of open space and ranges of area.

Benefits:

- ✓ Regional environmental and habitat information will be available for potential project site identification, refining habitat classifications across the region, and supporting evaluations and decision-making.
- ✓ Organized and quantified source information for regional stakeholders to access for future regional evaluations and funding opportunities.
- ✓ Framework from which regional- and project-level monitoring can be accomplished.

- ✓ Creates basis for identifying, mapping, quantifying, and screening of potential habitat restoration projects for entire Niagara River watershed thus supporting the GLRI-awarded project

Task Budget: \$43,912

- Costs are entirely labor (100%); includes 392 labor hours.
- Technical Disciplines principally involve GIS analysts, but also include Technical Team project manager (8 hours) for coordination and management, senior scientist, and two levels of junior scientists to support determination of critical datasets from which quantification, mapping, and analysis will be conducted.

Task 5: Identification of Potential Restoration Sites and Initial Screening

This task involves filtering and organizing all the information gathered on the broad landscape to support the location of areas and parcels. It is an iterative process of analyzing quantified spatial data to provide focus for the initial identification of parcels that exhibit characteristics that suggest that they may be suitable for habitat restoration. This task will identify areas suitable for restoration using analyses of regional data and input from stakeholders. A project screening protocol will be developed through the analysis and interpretation of the regional data. Upon finalization of the protocol, sites will be screened for suitability.

Outputs:

- ✓ Landscape level organization and evaluation of aggregate environmental data specific to the Regional Restoration Strategy; initial identification of potential restoration sites.

Benefits:

- ✓ Provides usable framework for developing criteria to analyze landscape that leads to categorization and selection of those sites determined to be initially identified as exhibiting potential for habitat restoration (Task 6).

Task Budget: \$72,535

- Costs are almost entirely labor (99%); includes 676 labor hours.
- A variety of Technical Disciplines will be needed to complete this task, including GIS analysts, Technical Team project manager, engineers, senior scientists, and junior scientists (biologists, geologists, ecologists, planners, engineers) to support the evaluation and screening process, determining appropriate screening criteria for initial site identification and an iterative process of evaluating GIS outputs. This task includes two, two-person teams of biologists that will conduct ground-truthing over the course of two days to support the desktop analyses. This field reconnaissance is estimated to include 80 hours.
- Non-labor costs include mileage for field reconnaissance, which is estimated to be 180 miles RT for two teams for two days for a total of 560 miles.
- Additional non-labor cost includes the rental of a Global Positioning System (GPS) unit for the collection of geo-referenced data during the field reconnaissance. Rental is for 4 days for 2 units for a cost of \$450.00.

Task 6: Develop, Evaluate, and Categorize Potential Projects for Identified Sites

Continue the process for developing, evaluating, and categorizing the list of potential project sites and determining site-specific restoration projects and conceptual restoration ideas. This task takes the identification and evaluation process down to a site-by-site level. It is expected that coordination with stakeholders will also support the process of site identification. The following list highlights the activities completed under this task:

- Develop site assessment criteria and methodology; assessment could include procedures such as determining the presence/absence of specific habitat components, determining stability of stream channel banks and beds, presence of invasive species, accessibility, etc.
- Conduct field assessments on up to 30 sites within the Greenway Boundary for various project categories. Field assessments will provide summary site descriptions and general restoration opportunities for each of the 30 sites.
- From the 30 sites, up to 5 sites will be selected to move forward to the Phase II application.
- Detailed site descriptions will be developed for up to 5 sites that will include: site description, habitat restoration opportunities along with conceptual restoration features and locations for those features, considerations for habitat restoration planning, potential permit requirements, and conceptual level of cost (final design will specify volumes, numbers, and specifications of restoration features which will then provide for more accurate costs).
- Update regional database based upon information gathered in the field to refine project screening and categorization process.

It is entirely possible that some of the demonstration projects selected will not require detailed design and, therefore, Phase II could include the construction of some projects. Conversely, due to complexity of some projects, the need for thorough analyses (hydraulic modeling, cut-and-fill calculations, site survey, etc.) and permitting requirements may require detailed design to support construction to specifications.

Outputs:

- ✓ Organization and screening of potential projects at the regional landscape level to support selection of sites for field assessments.
- ✓ List of up to 30 sites at which field assessments will be conducted to qualify site suitability and determine potential site-specific restoration opportunities.
- ✓ Short list (up to five) of demonstration projects for Phase II.

Benefits:

- ✓ Provides regional stakeholders with “ready list” of projects that they will be able to use—referencing the Regional Restoration Strategy—in funding applications. It is expected that projects could be developed for both GLRI and NYPA applications for FY12 and FY13.
- ✓ Provides clear and logical transition from planning to design and implementation (Phase I to Phase II).
- ✓ Sets the stage for future Greenway and potentially other funding for the design of up to five demonstration projects.

Task Budget: \$128,917

- Costs are predominantly labor (98%); includes 1101 labor hours.
- A variety of Technical Disciplines will be needed to complete this task, including GIS analysts, Technical Team project manager, engineers, senior scientists, and junior scientists (biologists, geologists, ecologists, planners, engineers) to further screen initial sites to identify the 30 sites determined to exhibit most suitable aggregate of characteristics for potential habitat restoration. Iterative in-office process, followed by extensive field data collection effort. Field data collection is followed by evaluation and interpretation of site specific data to determine those sites to be selected for Phase II.
- Total fieldwork for data collection across 30 sites assume one two-person team of biologists/ecologists, and that one site will be completed per day for a total of 30 days in the field and 480 labor hours. A senior ecologist will also support the field data collection

process at two selected sites for two days for a total of 16 hours. Total field hours expected to be 496.

- In-office hours involve analysis involved for site identification, map preparation, data sheet creation, post field data organization and evaluation, further site screening, detailed site documentation on up to five sites, and summary documentation on the remainder of the sites assessed in the field.
- Non-labor costs include mileage for field assessments, which is estimated to be 80 miles RT for 30 days for a total of 2400 miles, plus 80 miles RT for 2 days for senior ecologist (160 miles) for a task total of 2,560.
- Additional non-labor cost includes the rental of GPS unit for collection of geo-referenced data during the field assessment. Rental is for 30 days for a cost of \$850.00.

Task 7: Phase I Summary Document, Including Evaluation of Regional Economic Benefits Associated with Implementation of Strategy

Phase I of the project will culminate in a summary Niagara River Greenway Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy document that will document the regional restoration strategy development process:

- Identify the goals and objectives of the Regional Restoration Strategy;
- Describe the Strategy development process and the role of the Regional Restoration Strategy across various entities within the region;
- Describe the Regional Habitat Coordinator role;
- Provide summary information for the 30 sites assessed in the field;
- Provide detailed information (as described in Task 6) for up to five sites selected for Phase II;
- Identify regional economic benefits associated with implementation of the Regional Restoration Strategy;
- Identify and describe, as appropriate, any relationships between projects, such as necessary order of implementation; and
- Identify the general maintenance and monitoring activities associated with the sites selected for Phase II.

Partners and stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the Draft Strategy document, which will be available to the Greenway Commission, Standing Committees, and other stakeholders in a Web-compatible format.

Outputs:

- ✓ A document that summarizes the process for identifying and categorizing potential project, provides information for future stakeholders efforts, and lays out a process for future project development.

Benefits:

- ✓ The summary document can be attached or referenced to in funding applications for the GLRI, Niagara River Greenway, Department of State, and a variety of other public and private funding entities. The use of, and referencing of, the document will provide the evidence that comprehensive and collaborative planning and evaluation activities support the selection and construction of specific project sites within the Greenway and the entire Niagara River watershed

Task Budget: \$63,206

- Costs are almost entirely labor (99%); includes 541 labor hours.

- A variety of Technical Disciplines will be needed to complete this task, including technical editors, word processors, graphics artists, GIS analysts, Technical Team project manager, engineers, senior scientists, and junior scientists (biologists, geologists, ecologists, planners, engineers) to support the writing and editing of the document.
- Non-labor costs include mileage for two meetings between Technical Team and the Regional Habitat Coordinator, which is estimated to be 30 miles RT for a total of 60 miles.

Task 8: Initiate Development of Monitoring Program Framework

The framework will begin the work needed to develop a regional monitoring program for the Regional Restoration Strategy by:

- Establishing baseline conditions for potential project sites;
- Developing monitoring protocol for the sites selected for Phase II;
- Developing a defined Implementation Restoration Strategy Performance Program;
- Identifying measures to properly maintain and protect the function of projects; and
- Identifying means to ensure that proper maintenance is funded and performed for the life of each project.

It is possible that this monitoring framework could be utilized to track other Greenway-funded projects.

Outputs:

- ✓ The completion of Phase I and the culmination of all its outputs will provide for a region-specific template for creating a project monitoring framework.

Benefits:

- ✓ The project monitoring framework will provide performance based measures on a number of different levels and to support a variety of objectives. The monitoring framework will: help to evaluate the effectiveness and rate progress of the Regional Restoration Strategy; support tracking the monitoring and maintenance of site-specific projects; provide sub-watershed, Greenway, and Niagara River watershed-level evaluations of the cumulative contributions of restoration projects and other measures to the delisting of Beneficial Use Impairments and supporting the benefit of other environmental metrics (e.g., water quality, invasive species control and management, etc.).

Task Budget: \$26,928

- Costs are entirely labor (100%); includes 236 labor hours.
- Technical Disciplines involved will primarily be biologists, ecologists in the senior and junior categories, along with GIS analysts to support the initial development of the monitoring framework and considering the extrapolation of the framework across the Greenway.

Project Budget Summary

▪ Planning	\$ 391,502
▪ Construction	\$ 0
▪ Acquisition	\$ 0
▪ Regional Habitat Restoration Coordinator	\$ 100,524
▪ Operation and Maintenance/Year	\$ 0
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$ 492,026

Appendix A
PREVIOUS SUBMITTAL
(September 21, 2010)

**NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY REGIONAL HABITAT RESTORATION STRATEGY
RESUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION BY
THE NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY COMMISSION**

September 21, 2010

Prepared for:



NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY COMMISSION

Prepared by:

BUFFALO NIAGARA RIVERKEEPER



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September 21, 2010

Niagara River Greenway Commission
c/o Robert J. Kresse, Commission Chairman
Beaver Island State Park
2136 W. Oakfield Road
Grand Island, NY 14072

Dear Chairman Kresse:

The enclosed application package is a revision and re-submittal of the Niagara River Greenway Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy submitted to the Niagara River Greenway Commission on January 19, 2010. On March 16, 2010, the Commission determined the earlier application to be consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan vision, principles, and goals.

Since the March consistency determination, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper (Riverkeeper) was awarded a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) project entitled "Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy." That project was developed to support the implementation of the Regional Restoration Strategy by addressing restoration needs of the Niagara River watershed beyond the boundaries of the Greenway Boundary. This development has led Riverkeeper to revise the previous application to the Greenway Commission.

The project goal and objectives have not changed from the original application. The primary differences are that the project has been phased, the project area has expanded from the Greenway Focus Area to the eastern boundary of the Niagara River Greenway, and the planning timeframe has been shortened. Phase I will consist of the tasks proposed in the January 2010 application including development of the functional system for the Regional Restoration Strategy and GIS database, and the identification, characterization, and screening of potential restoration sites. Phase II will consist of preliminary design, including cost estimation and permit identification for up to five (5) demonstration projects. It is expected that at the culmination of Phase I that a second project application will be submitted to the Greenway Commission for consistency review for Phase II activities.

This application package includes printed copies of the revised application; the original January 19, 2010 application; two additional letters of support; and a CD containing all application-related document files.

Riverkeeper appreciates the Niagara River Greenway Commission's consideration of this application. Please direct any comments or questions to me at 716/852-7483, or by email:

Jedlicka@bnriverkeeper.org

Sincerely,

Jill S. Jedlicka
Director of Ecological Programs

enclosures

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

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Attachment 1

**NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY REGIONAL HABITAT
RESTORATION STRATEGY:
RESUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR
CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION BY THE NIAGARA
GREENWAY COMMISSION**

**Attachment 1:
Niagara River Greenway Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy:
Re-submission of Application for Consistency Determination by the
Niagara Greenway Commission**

I. Project Information

Organization Name and Mailing Address:

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper
1250 Niagara Street
Buffalo, New York 14213

Federal ID No.: 22-2993054

Point of Contact:

Jill Jedlicka
(716) 852-7483 *phone*
(716) 885-7065 *fax*
Jedlicka@bnriverkeeper.org

Ia. Revised Application - Approach Summary

Background: Update of Original Project Application

The Niagara River Greenway Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy (Regional Restoration Strategy) was provided to the Niagara River Greenway Commission for their review and consideration in January 2010 (see attached complete proposal dated January 19, 2010). During the Greenway Commission meeting on March 16, 2010 the Commission found that the Regional Restoration Strategy was consistent with the vision, goals, principles, and criteria of the Niagara River Greenway Plan. Since that time stakeholder coordination activities have continued and a related development occurred with the award of a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) project to the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper. The latter project, which is entitled “Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy.” was written to support the implementation of the Regional Restoration Strategy by addressing restoration needs of the Niagara River watershed beyond the boundaries of the Greenway Focus Area. These developments since the initial consistency finding by the Commission in March have resulted in re-examination of the original proposal and culminated in this revised application for the Regional Restoration Strategy for consideration by the Greenway Ecological Standing Committee.

While the project goals and objectives are the same as initially proposed, the Project Team is now proposing to develop the Strategy in two phases, which would translate to two funding intervals. The proposed phases are as follows:

Phase I—consists of the tasks proposed in the January 2010 application including development of the functional system for the Regional Restoration Strategy and

GIS database, and the identification, characterization, and screening of potential restoration sites.

Phase II—involves preliminary design, including cost estimation and permit identification for, up to five (5) demonstration projects. It is expected that at the culmination of Phase I that a second project application will be submitted to the Greenway Commission for consistency review for Phase II activities.

Added Benefits of Project from Revised Application

The benefits associated with this revised approach include:

- **Cost Sharing:** Niagara River Greenway funds will be complemented with GLRI funding to support the development and implementation of the Regional Restoration Strategy. The additional support of this project by the GLRI project will broaden the impact of achieving the following objectives and will support the development of a strategy that addresses ecological planning issues holistically (e.g., on watershed scale):
 - Identify and evaluate potential habitat restoration sites, conceptualize the types of restoration projects and designs, and identify restoration methods;
 - Provide the information and data needed to track and coordinate restoration projects, and the leverage needed to secure the local, state, federal, and private funds needed for restoration implementation;
 - Support the “Habitat Restoration Coordinator” who will coordinate the numerous stakeholders, technical experts, community involvement, communication, and diverse funding sources that are critical to habitat restoration implementation projects; and
 - Provide additional support and information for the delisting of habitat related Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) in both the Niagara River and Buffalo River Areas of Concern (AOCs).

- **Larger Area to be Included in Strategy Frame Work:** Together with the GLRI effort, the Regional Restoration Strategy will encompass the entire Niagara River watershed (with the exception of the lower Niagara River Gorge). The original proposal to the Greenway Commission involved developing and implementing the Regional Restoration Strategy for the Greenway Focus Area. The GLRI award by the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) to Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and our partners allows for re-allocation of previously budgeted personnel expenses and provides for expanding the scope of the Regional Restoration Strategy. In order to encompass the entire Greenway Boundary, the footprint for this application now extends beyond the Focus Area to the Greenway Boundary (see Figure 1). Consequently, the funding request of the Greenway Commission and relevant committee is for the geographic area containing the Greenway Boundary, and the GLRI funding will be used for the remaining portion of the Niagara River watershed outside of the Greenway Boundary.

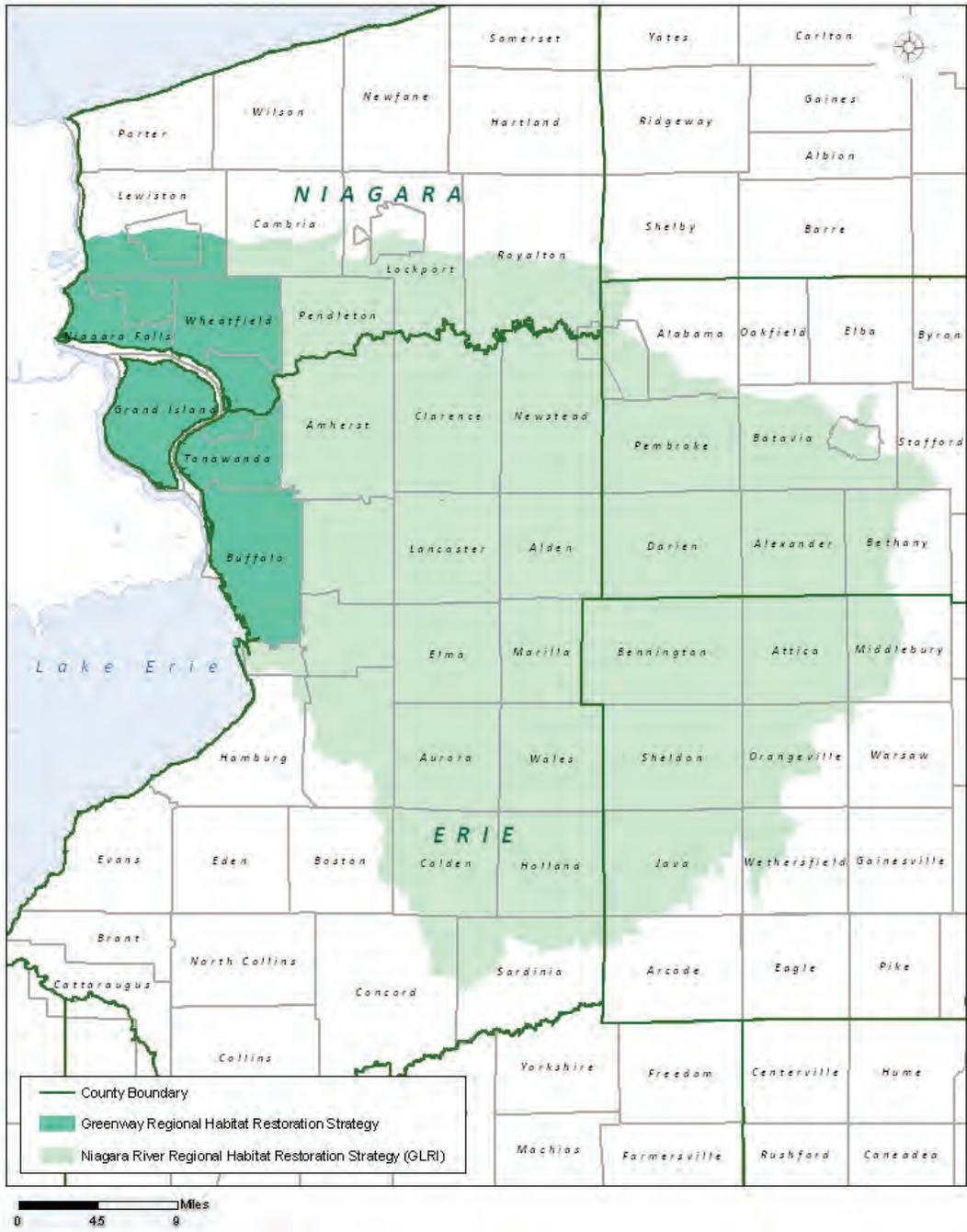


Figure 1: Project Area

- **Shorter Planning Time Frame/Support for Design and Construction of Habitat Restoration Demonstration Projects:** The initial proposal presented a 24-month planning process which provided for the support of a Regional Habitat Restoration Coordinator, and the following:
 - Development of Focus Area Habitat Restoration Database,
 - Determination of Regional Restoration Needs,
 - Identification of Site-Specific Restoration Projects and Conceptual Restoration Design,
 - Categorization of Potential Restoration Sites,
 - Initiation of a Monitoring Program, and
 - Production of a Strategy Document.

The current proposed approach will both achieve the objectives stated above as well as: (1) reduce the planning phase of the overall project to approximately 12 - 16 months; (2) increase the geographic footprint of the Greenway-funded portion of this regional project (as described above) to the entire Greenway Boundary, with the exception of part of the Town of Lewiston and the Town of Porter; and (3) enhance the project by including a second phase for the design of up to five demonstration projects within the Niagara Greenway.

As previously proposed, the development of the Regional Restoration Strategy and identification of habitat restoration projects throughout the Niagara River watershed will provide a “menu” for regional stakeholders to choose from for applying for diverse funding opportunities in the future.

Proposed Tasks, Outputs, Benefits, and Costs for Phase I

Task 1: Partial Funding for Habitat Coordinator Position

This project will partially support the Niagara River Regional “Habitat Restoration Coordinator” position in conjunction with the USEPA-funded GLRI project. This position will be created to manage development of the Regional Restoration Strategy, and to provide the necessary coordination and collaboration with regional stakeholders—resulting in a “Niagara River Habitat Collaborative.” Phase I Strategy Funds will be used to cover one half of the first year of the Coordinator’s salary and benefits while the GLRI project will fund the remainder of the salary for that position.

Outputs:

- ✓ **Support for Regional Habitat Coordinator position**

Benefits:

- ✓ **Providing an opportunity to complement local and federal funding to create a position that will direct the development and implementation of regional watershed habitat restoration effort**

Task Budget: \$35,000

Task 2: Outreach Support/Stakeholder Collaboration

The Project Team will support the efforts of the Habitat Restoration Coordinator by involving stakeholders in refining project scope; setting goals; determining assessment,

project categorization, and monitoring protocols; and reviewing and commenting on the Draft Regional Restoration Strategy. It is expected that there will be 12 meetings during Phase I with regional stakeholders and 12 project team meetings to support the collaboration, coordination, and efficiency of the development of the Regional Restoration Strategy. One parameter of success of Phase I will be the identification of those stakeholders that will actively pursue projects and funding in future years.

Outputs:

- ✓ **Support focused and coordinated efforts for collaboration for habitat restoration across the Niagara River Greenway (and Niagara River watershed)**
- ✓ **Continued feedback system through stakeholders for organization and presentation of ideas and information**

Benefits:

- ✓ **Planning and implementation strategy that synthesizes input from across the Niagara River Greenway (and Niagara River watershed via the GLRI project)**

Task Budget: \$32,100

Task 3: Data Acquisition/Database Construction

Develop a geographic information system (GIS)-based database to identify and support selection of projects, and actively track restoration projects. The construction of such a database could also support the Greenway Commission and its associated standing committees in tracking the status and performance of other Greenway-funded projects. The database will:

- House baseline information and incorporate project monitoring elements;
- Support the evaluation of work performance and the progress of specific restoration projects; and
- Provide valuable information to organizations securing funds in support of restoration and construction projects in the future.

Use of the database will allow applicants to effectively demonstrate the site-specific and regional benefits associated with implementing their proposed projects. The database will be available to any organization pursuing a habitat restoration project. Access to this information is not based on support of or participation in developing the Regional Restoration Strategy.

Outputs:

- ✓ **Fully functional GIS-based relational database**

Benefits:

- ✓ **“Living” relational database that will evolve over time as new data are added, potential projects added, and projects constructed**

Task Budget: \$51,500

Task 4: Quantification and Analysis of Regional Data to Determine Restoration Needs

The project will assess, characterize, and quantify existing in-channel, riparian, and selected nearby upland habitats within the project boundary. The project also will refine

regional, watershed, sub-watershed, and site-specific restoration needs, with participation by partners and stakeholders including riparian landowners. Initial analysis indicates there are approximately 38,000 parcels covering approximately 38,000 acres in the Niagara Greenway Focus Area alone. Approximately 7,500 acres are classified as vacant or forest, wild, and conservation land. There are approximately 152,000 acres within the broader Greenway Boundary. The results of the analysis conducted in this task will support Task 5.

Data collected, compiled, and organized into a relational database and then analyzed will include (but may not be limited to):

- Niagara and Erie County parcel mapping;
- Property code classifications;
- Wetlands;
- Floodplains;
- Available threatened and endangered species information;
- Water quality data;
- BUI recommendation strategies, delisting criteria, and recommendations;
- Flood and hydraulic studies;
- Existing restoration programs/plans/projects;
- Land use/land cover;
- Brownfields;
- Hazardous waste sites;
- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs);
- Local comprehensive land use and master plans;
- Sediment investigation or monitoring studies;
- USGS stream gauge information; and
- Town and municipal comprehensive or conservation plans; Local Waterfront Revitalization Programs (LWRPs), and greenway plans.

Outputs:

- ✓ **Centralized and accessible database for regional mapping and environmental data**

Benefits:

- ✓ **Regional environmental and habitat information will be available for potential project site identification, refining habitat classifications across the region, and supporting evaluations and decision-making**
- ✓ **Source information for regional stakeholders to access for future regional evaluations and funding opportunities**
- ✓ **Framework from which regional and project-level monitoring can be accomplished**
- ✓ **Creates basis for identifying, mapping, quantifying, and screening of potential habitat restoration projects for entire Niagara River watershed thus supporting the GLRI-awarded project**

Task Budget: \$44,200

Task 5: Identification of Potential Restoration Sites and Initial Screening

The project will identify areas suitable for restoration using analyses of regional data and input from stakeholders. Additionally, it will develop (or adapt from other regional restoration efforts) a site- and project-screening protocol. Upon finalization of the protocol, sites will be screened for feasibility. The output will be a list of potential restoration sites.

Outputs:

- ✓ **Landscape level organization and evaluation of aggregate environmental data specific to the Regional Restoration Strategy; initial identification of potential restoration sites**

Benefits:

- ✓ **Provides framework for developing criteria for categorization and selection of those sites determined to be suitable for habitat restoration (Task 6)**

Task Budget: \$60,800

Task 6: Develop, Evaluate and Categorize Potential Projects for Identified Sites

This project will involve completion of the process for developing, evaluating, and categorizing the list of potential project sites and determining site-specific restoration projects and conceptual restoration ideas. To achieve this, the Project Team will:

- Develop site assessment criteria and methodology, including procedures such as determining the presence/absence of specific habitat components, stability of stream channel banks and beds, presence of invasive species, accessibility, etc;
- Conduct field assessments on up to 50 sites within the Greenway Boundary for various project categories;
- Update regional database based upon information gathered in the field to refine project screening and categorization process;
- Identify site-specific restoration or enhancement measures, with input from stakeholders, including combinations of practices;
- Develop preliminary estimates for each project; estimates will be expressed as “order of magnitude” and may provide a range of costs; and
- Select 1 to 5 sites to move forward to the Phase II application, which will involve preliminary design and cost estimation, and permit requirements for up to five (5) demonstration projects.

It is entirely possible that the types of some of the demonstration projects selected will not require detailed design and therefore Phase II could include the construction of some projects. Conversely, due to complexity of some projects, the need for thorough analyses (hydraulic modeling, cut-and-fill calculations, site survey, etc.) and permitting requirements may require detailed design to support construction to specifications.

Outputs:

- ✓ **Organization and screening of potential projects at the regional landscape level to support selection of sites for field assessments**
- ✓ **List of up to 50 sites at which field assessments will be conducted to qualify site suitability and determine potential site-specific restoration opportunities**
- ✓ **Short list of demonstration projects for Phase II**

Benefits:

- ✓ Provides regional stakeholders with “ready list” of projects that they will be able to use – referencing the Regional Restoration Strategy – in funding applications. It is expected that projects could be developed for both GLRI and NYPA applications for FY12 and FY13
- ✓ Provides clear and logical transition from planning to design and implementation (Phase I to Phase II)
- ✓ Sets the stage for future Greenway and potentially other funding for the design of up to 5 demonstration projects

Task Budget: \$91,650

Task 7: Phase I Summary Document, Including Evaluation of Regional Economic Benefits Associated with Implementation of Strategy

Phase I of the project will culminate in a Niagara River Greenway Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy document that will detail the regional restoration strategy development process. In this document, the Project Team will:

- Identify the goals and objectives of the Regional Restoration Strategy;
- Describe the Strategy development process and the role of the Regional Restoration Strategy across various entities within the region;
- Describe the Regional Habitat Coordinator role;
- Summarize candidate sites for restoration, and categorized by project types, phase, and scale;
- Identify and evaluate regional economic benefits associated with implementation of the Regional Restoration Strategy;
- Identify and describe, as appropriate, any relationships between projects, such as necessary order of implementation; and
- Identify the maintenance and monitoring activities that will be required for all projects.

Partners and stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the Draft Strategy document which will be available to the Greenway Commission, Standing Committees, and other stakeholders in a Web-compatible format.

Outputs:

- ✓ A document that summarizes the process for identifying and categorizing potential project, provides information for future stakeholders efforts, and lays out a process for future project development

Benefits:

- ✓ The summary document can be attached or referenced to in funding applications for the GLRI, Niagara River Greenway, Department of State, and a variety of other public and private funding entities. The use of, and referencing of, the document will provide the evidence that comprehensive and collaborative planning and evaluation activities support the selection and construction of specific project sites within the Greenway and the entire Niagara River watershed

Task Budget: \$67,600

Task 8: Initiate Development of Monitoring Program Framework

By initiating the development of a framework, we will begin the work needed to develop a regional monitoring program for the Regional Restoration Strategy by:

- Establishing baseline conditions for potential project sites;
- Developing monitoring protocol, with input from stakeholders;
- Developing a defined Implementation Restoration Strategy Performance Program;
- Identifying measures to properly maintain and protect the function of projects; and
- Identifying means to ensure that proper maintenance is funded and performed for the life of each project.

It is possible that this monitoring framework could be utilized to track other Greenway-funded projects.

Outputs:

- ✓ **The completion of Phase I and the culmination of all its outputs will provide for a region-specific template for creating a project monitoring framework**

Benefits:

- ✓ **The project monitoring framework will provide performance based measures on a number of different levels and to support a variety of objectives. The monitoring framework will: help to evaluate the effectiveness and rate progress of the Regional Restoration Strategy; support tracking the monitoring and maintenance of site-specific projects; provide sub-watershed, Greenway, and Niagara River watershed level evaluations of the cumulative contributions of restoration projects and other measures to the delisting of BUIs and supporting the benefit of other environmental metrics (e.g., water quality, invasive species control and management, etc.).**

Task Budget: \$26,150

II. Evidence of Consultation

The Greenway Commission voted unanimously that the Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan's vision, goals, principles, and criteria for the evaluation of proposed resource restoration projects within the defined Greenway. The presentation to the Greenway Commission and subsequent vote of consistency was on March 16, 2010 (see attached minutes from the 33rd meeting of the Niagara River Greenway Commission).

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has developed the concept for the Strategy by collaborating with numerous regional stakeholders to discuss the need for a centralized regional approach for habitat restoration. Several meetings were held during the fall and winter of 2009 to refine the ideas and approach supporting the original proposal to the Greenway Commission. The meetings were supplemented by numerous telephone discussions, conference calls, and e-mail correspondence. The feedback from those involved to date demonstrated that there is substantial support for this project. The stakeholders view the Strategy as not only a comprehensive approach for regional habitat restoration planning and implementation, but also a process by which to track and effectively capitalize on

future funding opportunities. The following stakeholders participated in the preliminary discussions about this project:

- Tift Nature Preserve;
- NYSDEC;
- USFWS;
- Erie County Department of Environment and Planning;
- Forest Lawn Cemetery;
- Great Lakes Angler Association;
- Trout Unlimited;
- Niagara County Soil and Water Conservation District; and
- Buffalo Audubon.

The development and implementation of this project have been scoped in such a way as to incorporate communication, collaboration, and coordination throughout the life of the effort. The process will be open and will encourage the participation of any interested stakeholder within the region, including private citizens, citizen groups, natural resource agencies, and municipalities.

III. Operation and Maintenance Plan

Phase I of this Strategy consists of development of two main parts: an Operational Framework for Strategy and a GIS Database, and the Identification, Characterization, and Screening of Potential Restoration Sites. As the first phase of this project involves planning, an operation and maintenance (O&M) plan is not required. Long-term management of the regional database will have to be determined in the future.

Phase II of this Strategy will consist of the design of and cost estimation for up to five (5) Demonstration Projects. A component of design for these sites will involve the specifying of specific O&M activities that will need to be accomplished for each project location. Those detailed O&M plans will be developed during Phase II.

IV. Description of Project Consistency with the Niagara River Greenway Plan

The Greenway Commission voted unanimously that the Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan's vision, goals, principles, and criteria for the evaluation of proposed resource restoration projects within the defined Greenway. Due to the changes in geographic scope and implementation of the Regional Restoration Strategy (two phases), this current re-submission acts as a second request for confirming (or re-confirming) consistency with the principles of the Greenway Plan.

One of the primary purposes of the Greenway Plan is to ensure the long-term maintenance of the natural resources of the Greenway. The Regional Restoration Strategy supports the vision of the Niagara River Greenway Plan and meets key goals, including

restoring, enhancing, and increasing the ecological integrity of the Greenway. The Regional Restoration Strategy also supports many planning efforts including the NYSDEC open space plan; Niagara River RAP; the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation biodiversity studies; and the Niagara River IBA habitat characterization. The original proposal (dated January 19, 2010) providing a more detailed presentation of the various ways this proposal is consistent with the Greenway Plan is included in this submittal to the Ecological Standing Committee in Attachment 2.

The Regional Restoration Strategy serves to advance the Niagara River Greenway vision including the goals, principles, and criteria that define the vision. Page 11 through 16 of the Greenway application clearly demonstrates how the proposed project aligns with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

The Regional Restoration Strategy meets eight of the eleven guiding principles of the Niagara River Greenway. The Regional Restoration Strategy will incorporate and promote the Niagara River goals that are designed to help fulfill the vision for the Greenway. The Restoration Strategy meets three key Greenway goals and nine of the ten Greenway criteria.

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper received notice of a preliminary award for a grant of GLRI funds from USEPA for the Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy that will complement the work of this Regional Restoration Strategy. Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and our partners will continue to search for additional funds that may be leveraged by the Greenway funds.

The proposed project will significantly improve the regional environment by positioning the region to enhance or restore critical ecological functions and processes in degraded aquatic and riparian habitats. The region also will benefit from the creation of a regional framework and system that will be used to track progress over time and establish a long-term monitoring protocol. Benefits resulting from this project include enhanced sustainability, increased river access, improvements in quality of life and regional economic outlook, and the fostering of stewardship.

V. Description of Project Consistency with State and Federal Laws and Regulations

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has a long history of close collaboration with agencies such as USACE, NYSDEC and USFWS. Riverkeeper has been actively involved within the Niagara River and Buffalo River watersheds for over 20 years. The organization is currently the federally designated Coordinator of the Buffalo River AOC Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and a standing member of the Niagara River AOC Remedial Action Committee (RAC).

In addition to providing the means to coordinate planning efforts of state and local government and provide consistency for evaluating restoration projects, this project will

be consistent with State and Federal laws and regulations. Regulating agencies will have opportunities to review draft plans. Any designs and construction to be developed by Phase II would adhere to local, State and Federal laws and regulations for protection of the public and the environment. All projects developed in Phase II will be subject to applicable SEQRA, Section 404/401 Clean Water Act, and other regulatory requirements.

VI. Description of Efforts/Opportunities for Matching Funds

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper firmly believes that any entity that receives funding from the New York Power Authority (NYPA) Greenway Fund has a moral obligation to the community to leverage those funds for additional local, state, federal, or private resources in order to provide additional economic and environmental benefit to the Niagara River. Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and our partners will seek out funding for habitat restoration Implementation using NYPA evaluation/assessment funds as a local match.

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper was recently awarded a grant of approximately \$250,000 of GLRI funds from USEPA for the Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy and Blueprint that will complement the work of the Niagara Greenway strategy within the broader Niagara River watershed.

In addition to the GLRI, possible funding sources include: Great Lakes Legacy Act; New York State (NYS) Department of State, Coastal Zone Management funds; NYSDEC, Environmental Protection Fund; USFWS; USACE RAP Program; and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Among these funding sources, potential opportunities exist, such as federal appropriations for environmental restoration projects and funding instruments that can be applied to environmental restoration and investments (e.g., Build America Bonds), among others. Funding sources available within the Great Lakes Basin (earmarked for GLRI initiatives) are additional potential sources. The leveraged funding strategy will be developed at a very opportune time due to significant increases in funding of Great Lakes-related programs by the federal government. In addition, combinations of grants and federal, state, local, and private funding sources will be used to optimize development of a financial package that sustains the environmental assets at the lowest cost to taxpayers.

VII. Limitations on Use of Greenway Funds

The funds requested from the Niagara River Greenway Commission will not be used to defray: (1) any obligation existing as of August 31, 2007, or (2) operation and maintenance costs associated with any project existing as of August 31, 2007.

VIII. Description of Current and Proposed Project Area Land Ownership

Ownership of land that may be the subject of future restoration projects will be identified and evaluated with respect to its impact on the feasibility of implementing future projects. Any constraints such as restrictions that may result from private ownership or the

presence of ecologically or culturally sensitive resources will be noted and will be factored into the screening and evaluation of project locations.

IX. Project Budget Summary

Planning	\$ 374,000
Construction	\$ 0
Acquisition	\$ 0
Regional Habitat Restoration Coordinator	\$ 35,000
Operation and Maintenance/Year	\$ 0
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$ 409,000

Attachment 2

**ORIGINAL APPLICATION
(January 19, 2009)**

**NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY REGIONAL HABITAT RESTORATION
STRATEGY**

January 19, 2010

Prepared for:



NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY COMMISSION

Prepared by:

BUFFALO NIAGARA RIVERKEEPER

Project Registration Number _____

*Niagara River Greenway Commission
Consultation and Review Form*

Type of Review Required:

Mandatory Consultation

_____ Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement

PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name: Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper
Mailing Address: 1250 Niagara Street, Buffalo
State: New York
Zip Code: 14213
Federal ID No.: 22-2993054
Charities Registration No.: N/A

PROJECT TYPE

Check all that apply: Environmental _ Cultural/Heritage ___ Land or Water Public
Access
___ Cultural ___ Trail _ Educational/Interpretive ___ Waterfront or Land Based
Development ___ Signage Recreational ___ Other

Project Name: **Niagara Greenway Region Habitat Restoration Strategy**

Location: The Niagara River Greenway
Site Address:

State: New York Zip Code:
Minor Civil Division(s):

County: Erie and Niagara
Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other): Other—all lands
within the Greenway boundary, private and public.

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

Name: Julie Barrett O’Neill, Esq.
Title: Executive Director
Business Address: 1250 Niagara Street, Buffalo
State: New York
Zip Code: 14213
Telephone Number: 716/852-7483
Cell Number: N/A

Fax Number: 716/885-0765

E-Mail Address: jboneill@bnriverkeeper.org

PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT

Name: Jill Jedlicka

Title: Director of Ecological Programs

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Fax Number: 716/885-0765

E-Mail Address: Jedlicka@bnriverkeeper.org

PROJECT NARRATIVE

NIAGARA RIVER GREENWAY REGIONAL HABITAT RESTORATION STRATEGY

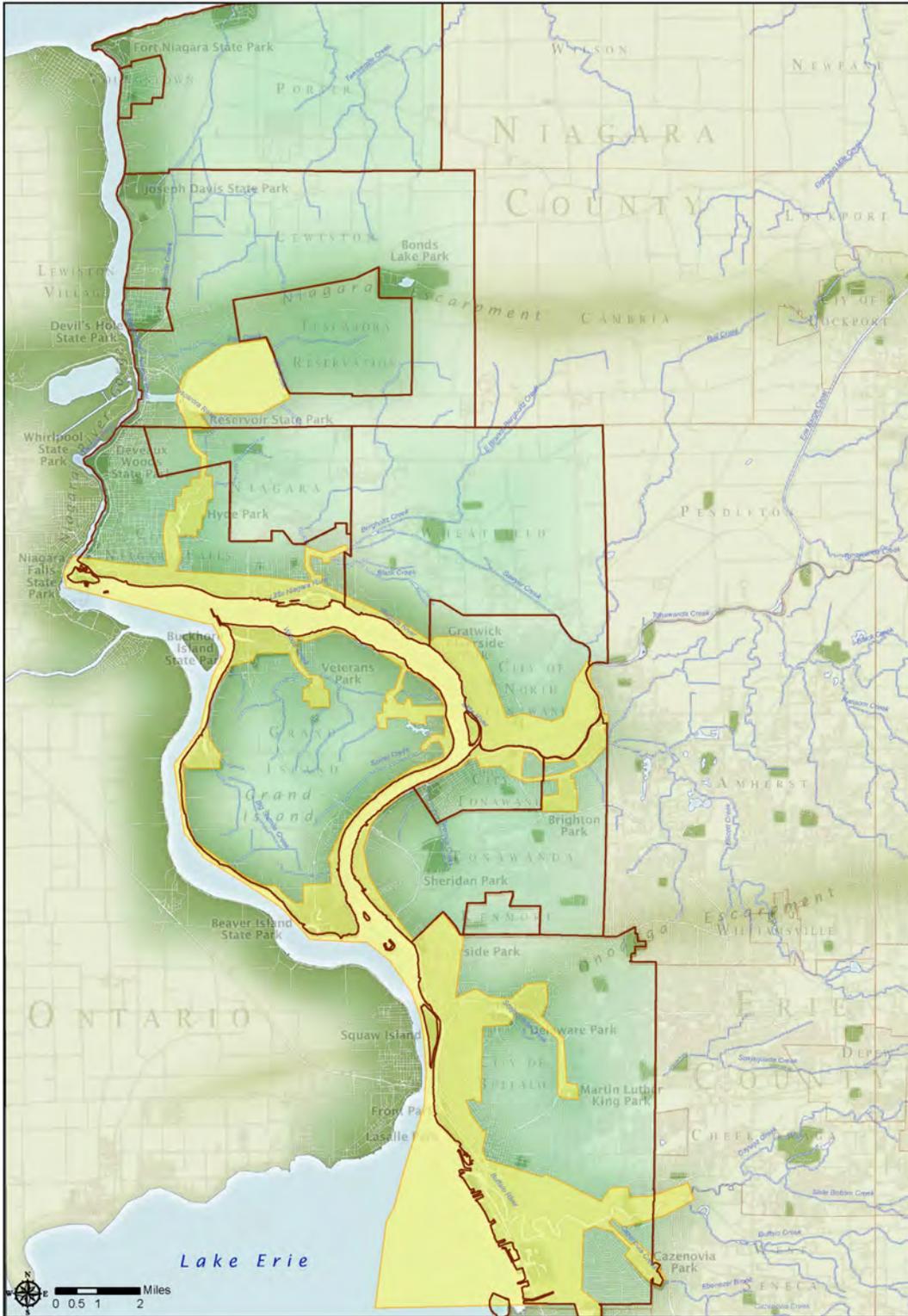
- 1 *In a brief paragraph, describe the project and its purpose, how and when it will be accomplished, and why it is important.*

Project and Purpose

In developing this proposal, the project co-sponsors—consisting of Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper (hereinafter referred to as “Riverkeeper”) and Ecology and Environment Engineering, P.C., in association with Ecology and Environment, Inc. (hereinafter collectively referred to as E & E)—are advocating the Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy (Strategy), which is a comprehensive approach for developing a consensus-based regional habitat implementation strategy to obtain the following results:

- Identify and evaluate potential habitat restoration sites, conceptualize the types of restoration projects and designs, and identify restoration methods;
- Establish a project evaluation method to allow comparison of the relative costs and benefits of project site alternatives and future proposed restoration projects;
- Provide the information needed to track and coordinate restoration projects and use the leverage needed to secure the local, state, federal, and private funds needed for restoration implementation;
- Establish the position of dedicated “Habitat Restoration Coordinator”—this individual will support the collaboration and coordination of numerous stakeholders and technical experts, and coordinate community involvement, communication activities, and diverse funding sources that are critical to habitat restoration implementation projects;
- Provide additional support for the delisting of habitat-related Beneficial Use Impairments (BUIs) in the Niagara River and Buffalo River Areas of Concern (AOCs); and
- Establish a project monitoring process and performance measures Niagara Greenway Region. The monitoring process will be used to gauge progress over time in meeting the Niagara River Greenway’s vision, goals, principles, and criteria.

As a truly regional approach for restoration within the Niagara River watershed—and specifically within the Niagara River Greenway Focus Area above Niagara Falls—the Strategy, when implemented, will result in the completion of a detailed examination of potential restoration sites within the Niagara Greenway Focus Area upstream of Niagara Falls (as identified in the *Niagara River Greenway Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*) (see Figure 1). The Greenway Focus Area above Niagara Falls includes an area consisting of over 4,750 parcels comprising 7,518 acres classified as vacant, wild, forested, or conservation land. Approximately 38.7 miles of river and stream channels are included.



Niagara Greenway
Region

-  Approximate Greenway Focus Area
-  Boundary Upstream of Niagara Falls
-  Greenway Boundary

DATA SOURCES: New York Power Authority,
Erie County Office of Geographic Information Systems,
Niagara County Office of Real Property Tax.

 
SYNEGRAPHICS 
Map Created: September, 2006 WD-Project # 427001

Figure 1: NIAGARA GREENWAY REGION AND FOCUS AREA

Creation of a Habitat Restoration Coordinator position will fill a personnel gap within the existing federal agencies to support the project's requirements for coordination, communication, and collaboration. These three elements are necessary to ensure successful interaction with and participation of the various regional stakeholders, in order to initiate the planning and design of habitat restoration projects, track habitat restoration initiatives, and establish a project performance monitoring system.

Riverkeeper is submitting a parallel proposal to the Great Lakes National Program Office (GLNPO) under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to complete complementary work across the regional landscape beyond the Greenway Focus Area and within the Niagara River watershed. The two proposals leverage and strengthen each other. Both will use an ecosystem-based approach to habitat restoration planning. Nonetheless, the project proposed here is viable on its own and will be critical for organizing and solidifying efforts to plan, design, and construct habitat restoration projects for the benefit of all communities across the region. Strategy development is not a linear process, and the stakeholders intend on identifying and pursuing funding sources and partners to begin implementing habitat projects that would qualify for short-term immediate implementation. Thus, some projects will be implemented in the near term without compromising the Strategy.

This project will deliver the following:

- **Strategy**—a process that will identify, evaluate, characterize, and map candidate restoration sites within the Niagara Greenway Focus Area and describe the framework for ecosystem-based planning and developing restoration projects in greater Niagara River watershed. This process will be dynamic and will not consist of an exclusive or exhaustive list or prioritization of projects; rather, this process will provide a blueprint that will be added to, modified, and updated periodically to reflect current status over time.

A short-term result (at the end of two years) of the Strategy will be preparation of a report that discusses the process used to develop the Strategy, contains details on the potential restoration sites selected, describes project monitoring and performance evaluation methods, and specifies how future restoration efforts will be coordinated with the assistance of the Habitat Restoration Coordinator. A parallel process is currently underway in the Buffalo River watershed as part of a partnership between the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Riverkeeper. A model of habitat restoration planning was conducted in Muskegon Lake, Michigan, and will be referred to during this process (*Muskegon Lake, Ruddiman Creek and Nearby Shoreline Ecological Restoration Master Plan*, March 31, 2008.)

Potential restoration sites and projects will be evaluated within both the broader context of the watersheds within which each site is situated, and the interrelationships between the restoration sites and the Greenway as a whole. In that way, the Strategy will ensure that habitat degradation caused by upstream conditions can be addressed in logical sequence. Placing potential projects in proper watershed context will

improve the effectiveness of restoration efforts in the region and assist funding agencies in evaluating the relative value of proposed projects.

- **Habitat Restoration Coordinator** (This proposal accounts for a two-year funded position)—to coordinate the evaluation and assessment process, compile data, identify restoration methods, and enhance communications and information-sharing among the agencies, commissions, and several other stakeholder organizations and municipalities.

In order to develop a comprehensive Strategy, the Coordinator will engage Greenway stakeholders, standing committees, and community representatives in a process that will build on past efforts to characterize habitats and identify restoration opportunities. Effective collaboration among stakeholders will start by clearly defining the scope of the Strategy and establishing goals and objectives that stakeholders can support. Stakeholders will also provide input to the Strategy, especially with regard to the processes of categorizing and assessing projects by phase (short-term or long-term), reviewing monitoring protocol, and determining the best ways to ensure that projects are maintained after implementation.

- **Habitat Restoration Database**—a geographic information system (GIS)-based database will be developed to actively track restoration projects. The database will house baseline information and incorporate project monitoring elements, in order to support the evaluation of work performance and the progress of specific restoration projects. The database will provide valuable information to entities applying for funds in support of restoration projects in the future. Use of the database will allow applicants to more effectively and logically demonstrate the site-specific and regional benefits associated with implementing their proposed project. This database will be available to any entity pursuing a habitat restoration project, and access to this information is not based on their explicit support or participation in developing the Strategy.
- **Funding Sources Identification**—each project and restoration site alternative will have unique characteristics that require a skillful and knowledgeable evaluation of the possible funding sources. Throughout the Great Lakes, habitat master planning has often been implemented by EPA or state agencies, but lacks the important local control and input needed to make these plans useful and dynamic.

Riverkeeper is taking the lead on this application and effort after months of discussions, meetings, and idea-sharing with habitat-based stakeholders. Letters of support from a number of regional stakeholders are provided in Attachment A. In addition, a letter of support from the City of Buffalo is pending.

Riverkeeper has also been actively involved within the Niagara River and Buffalo River watersheds for over 20 years. The organization is currently the federally designated Coordinator of the Buffalo River AOC Remedial Action Plan (RAP) and a standing member of the Niagara River AOC Remedial Action Committee (RAC).

Riverkeeper also serves as the convener of the Cayuga Creek Watershed Steering Committee. In terms of grants and project management experience, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has successfully secured and managed over \$5 million in local, state, and federal funding during the last five years.

Anticipated Project Tasks

An underlying element of the Strategy is that it will be a long-term and dynamic process that will maintain an “open door policy” relative to the inclusion of other stakeholders in the future. The funding request in this application covers a two-year period to build the framework; however, an expected outcome of initiating the Strategy will be to identify existing or future resources and mechanisms to support the ongoing iterative and stakeholder-development process. Since the output of information resulting from this project will benefit the objectives of both the Buffalo and Niagara River RAPs in their efforts to “delist” habitat-related BUIs, the RAP processes are potential vehicles that can be used to continue the Strategy. The task summary list provided below is expected to occur within, and over the course of, the first two years of the project.

We anticipate that the following tasks will be required:

- **Task 1—Establish and Provide Technical Assistance to a Niagara River Regional “Habitat Restoration Coordinator” Position.** This position would be created to manage development of the Strategy and to provide the necessary coordination and collaboration with regional stakeholders—resulting in kind of a “Niagara River Habitat Collaborative.”

Involve Stakeholders in Refining Scope, Setting Goals, Determining Protocol, and Reviewing and Commenting on Draft Strategy. We will hold several large, formal meetings and smaller meetings with stakeholders to get input from and build support among stakeholders for the Strategy.

- **Task 2—Restate and Refine Project Scope, Goals, and Objectives:**
 - Task 2.1: Finalize project scope, with input from the Collaborative.
 - Task 2.2: Establish goals and objectives for the Strategy in conjunction with stakeholders.
 - Task 2.3: Set habitat restoration goals and objectives for the area within the Greenway boundary.
- **Task 3—Determine Restoration Needs:**
 - Task 3.1: Assess, characterize, and quantify existing habitat within the project boundary. Evaluate in-channel, riparian, and selected nearby upland areas.
 - Task 3.2: Refine regional, watershed, sub-watershed, and site-specific restoration needs, with participation by partners and stakeholders including landowners of riparian lands.
 - Task 3.3: Develop GIS-based regional restoration database.

- **Task 4—Develop Site-Specific Restoration Projects and Conceptualize Restoration Design:**
 - Task 4.1: Develop (or adapt from other regional restoration efforts) site and project screening protocol.
 - Task 4.2: Identify areas suitable for restoration, with input from stakeholders.
 - Task 4.3: Screen sites for feasibility.
 - Task 4.4: Identify site-specific restoration or enhancement measures, with input from stakeholders, including combinations of practices.
 - Task 4.5: Develop preliminary estimate for each project; estimate will be expressed as a range of cost.

- **Task 5—Evaluate and Categorize Potential Projects:**
 - Task 5.1: Develop site evaluation criteria, with participation by and consensus of the stakeholders.
 - Task 5.2: Assign phase and scale categories to potential site-specific measures.
 - Task 5.3: Describe benefits that would accrue from each potential project, including economic impacts, to the extent that these impacts are quantifiable. Identify benefits, disadvantages, and the cost of each site-specific measure.

- **Task 6—Establish and Implement a Monitoring and Maintenance Program:**
 - Task 6.1: Establish baseline conditions for potential project sites.
 - Task 6.2: Develop monitoring protocol, with input from stakeholders.
 - Task 6.3: Develop a defined Implementation Restoration Strategy Performance Program.
 - Task 6.4: Identify measures to properly maintain and protect the function of projects.
 - Task 6.5: Identify means to ensure that proper maintenance is funded and performed for the life of each project.

- **Task 7—Create Strategy Document:**
 - Task 7.1: Document the Strategy development process:
 - ◇ Identify the goals and objectives of the Strategy;
 - ◇ Describe the Strategy development process and the role of the Strategy across various entities within the region;
 - ◇ Describe the Regional Habitat Coordinator role;
 - ◇ Provide a brief overview of current conditions and the areas reviewed for potential projects;
 - ◇ Summarize candidate sites for restoration, categorized by relative priority, phase, and scale;
 - ◇ Identify and describe, as appropriate, any relationships between projects, such as necessary order of implementation; and

- ◇ Identify the maintenance and monitoring activities that will be required for all projects. Partners and stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on the draft Strategy document.
- Task 7.2: Make the Strategy document available to the Greenway Commission and other stakeholders in a Web-compatible format.

Regional Importance of the Project

Creating the Catalyst for Action and Leveraging of Additional Funds for the Region. Developing the Niagara Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy is critically important at this time. There is an historic opportunity to address habitat-related BUIs in the AOCs and the availability of restoration project funds in the Great Lakes basin. Various agencies and organizations started receiving authorities and granting historic levels of funding for ecosystem restoration in the Great Lakes basin. Completing the Strategy will allow the Niagara Region to compete for these funds and bring much needed habitat restoration funding to our community.

Specifically, the area of greatest need is to secure funds that will lead to land acquisition and the design and construction of restoration projects. The momentum gained from the Strategy will lead directly to funding for projects as early as Fiscal Year 2010-2011. The Strategy will benefit from the fact that several efforts have recently been made to assess habitat and water and watershed resources in the project area. In addition, GLNPO and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)-Buffalo District are in the early stages of planning habitat restoration projects in the proposed project area. There is a need to have an open, yet cohesive, and collaborative vision for habitat restoration and the monitoring of restoration activities across the region, in order to effectively and successfully reap the environmental, social, recreational, and economic benefits that will result from restoration efforts.

Regional and Global Importance of the Niagara Greenway. The Niagara River Greenway corridor is a bi-national waterway, a Great Lakes “Area of Concern,” and is immediately downstream of the Buffalo River Area of Concern. It supports a world-class fishery and birding area. Niagara Falls and its associated natural resources are a tourism destination for over 10 million people annually. The economic prosperity of the Niagara Region is inextricably linked to the biological and ecological health of the river and other natural resources in the Greenway corridor.

In 1996, the river course and the surrounding riparian corridor was designated an internationally recognized “globally significant” Important Bird Area (the Niagara River Important Bird Area or Niagara River IBA). The corridor provides essential habitat to a wide variety of bird species that travel through the corridor or breed here, including waterfowl, raptors, songbirds, shorebirds, and others. Over 30 species of endangered birds, threatened birds, or birds of special concern are found here, including the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the black tern, and the common tern. Floral and faunal species on the New York State Endangered, Threatened, or Species of Special Concern lists also occur within the corridor.

Local governments have acknowledged the importance of the ecological value of the Niagara River. The Buffalo Common Council passed a resolution in 1998 recognizing the ecological and economic value of the Niagara River and its associated natural resources. The resolution states, in part, that the Niagara River IBA designation means “that the ecology of the Niagara River Corridor must be carefully integrated into the city's plans, laws, projects, and processes.”

General Site Information

The Niagara River corridor is the major drainage channel for the Great Lakes watershed and is a globally significant migratory flyway for many species of neotropical migrants, raptors, and waterfowl, as well as home to resident game and non-game species of birds.

The Niagara River Greenway, as defined in the *Niagara River Greenway Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*, encompasses the riparian terrestrial and aquatic resources which are the subject of the Strategy (see Figure 1 above). These natural resources are associated with riparian land and watersheds of the Niagara River connecting Lakes Ontario and Erie. The upper-river system, from Lake Erie to Niagara Falls, is distinctly different from the lower-river system in terms of land use and their respective floral/faunal communities and habitats. The upper-river fishery and riparian corridor contains a landscape that is characterized by a mosaic of residential, commercial, parkland, and industrial land use. Habitat form and function within the upper river is impacted by a combination of infrastructure, contamination, and invasive species.

This proposal is concerned with the Greenway Focus Area upstream of Niagara Falls. This part of the Focus Area includes significant areas of aging or obsolete industrial infrastructure; highly modified natural environment, with historic and ongoing anthropogenic stressors; and a fragmented, but globally significant, biotic environment. The region has a long history of industrial activity and environmental degradation, including the release of toxic materials and the dredging and filling of riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats. In addition, development of the watersheds has caused additional damage to aquatic, riparian, wetland, and upland habitats, resulting in the release of sediment and pollutants from upstream areas, thereby further compromising habitat in the Greenway. The Strategy outlined in this proposal will facilitate restoration of the disturbed or degraded habitats in the Focus Area and provide logical connections to upstream enhancement and restoration projects.

- 2. Referring to the Niagara River Greenway Plan, clearly document and describe how the proposed project will advance the Niagara River Greenway vision, including the goals, principles, and criteria that define that vision.***

Niagara River Greenway Vision, Principles, Goals, and Criteria

The Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan’s vision, goals, principles, and criteria for the evaluation of proposed resource restoration projects within the defined Greenway.

Vision

The proposed project will further the vision of the Niagara River Greenway Plan by establishing sustainability, ecological health, and social well-being within this world-class river corridor. This will be accomplished by restoring and protecting ecological functions, increasing ecological integrity, returning natural resources to the original character of the area to the extent possible, and protecting and restoring environmental systems. The Strategy plan outlined in this proposal will further current collaborative efforts to create a regional, working framework for actively supporting attainment of the Niagara River Greenway's vision.

Advancing Greenway Goals

The Strategy will advance the Niagara River Greenway's goal of making connections by promoting natural resource and habitat connectivity between the various elements located within the local and regional landscape. The Greenway's goal of protecting and restoring environmental systems will be advanced by the creation of a framework for planning and implementing all habitat restoration in the Greenway region. Projects planned and implemented within the framework will increase the sustainability of the habitat. The project proposed herein will also create a system that supports the maintenance and monitoring of restoration projects, in order to ensure their continuing viability and value.

Consistency with Principles

The proposed project design elements and deliverables are consistent with the Greenway Plan and specifically address the following principles:

- **Excellence.** The Strategy, when implemented, will help maintain and improve the status of the Niagara River Greenway as a globally significant area for fish and wildlife.
- **Ecological Integrity.** The goal of this project is to restore, enhance, and increase ecological and biological integrity and sustainability within the Niagara River Corridor and surrounding areas and support the complementary effort in the greater Niagara River watershed. Restoration, enhancement, remediation, and overall habitat diversity within the regional landscape will increase structural complexity and provide for both new and expanded habitats. This will have beneficial effects on regional ecological and biological integrity and increase wildlife values for a greater variety of species. Over time, implementation of the Strategy will **protect and restore environmental systems** within the entire Niagara Region. Site evaluations will be conducted to support the mapping of candidate restoration sites, the integration of sites into the overall habitat restoration database, and the selection of appropriate ecological community trajectories.
- **Restoration.** This Strategy will facilitate the enhancement and restoration of altered or degraded aquatic and terrestrial habitat and will enhance the effectiveness of restoration efforts throughout the Niagara Region. Such restoration will support recreational and traditional/historic uses of the river and other areas within the Greenway.

- **Connectivity.** The creation and subsequent implementation and management of the Strategy will promote natural resource and habitat connectivity between the various elements located within the local and regional landscape. By its very nature, the Strategy focuses on—and will provide clarity relative to—the interdependencies between watershed condition and receiving water health. Through implementing restoration projects consistent with the Strategy, connections between upper- and lower-watershed habitats will be improved. Enhanced connectivity will provide additional opportunities for recreational use, increase social well-being, and support the growing sense of regional stewardship.

Increasing public awareness of our resources and establishing greater connectivity between areas will **improve access and make connections** and linkages between communities and people and their natural resources.

- **Sustainability.** Consideration of this project by Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper is based upon the concept of returning biotic system sustainability to the Niagara Greenway Focus Area and, ultimately, the greater Niagara River watershed. In particular, the objective of this project is to create an expanded mosaic of areas of open space that will provide increased habitat and wildlife values for various species assemblages, and to establish connections between the upper portions of the Niagara River watershed to the lower watershed and the river itself.
- **Authenticity.** The current state of many sites within the Niagara Greenway Focus Area and Niagara Region strongly suggests that the regional landscape could be functioning at higher levels and provide greater values to the environment and communities within the region. This project has been developed to enhance **public well-being** by promoting and achieving environmental, physical, and emotional wellness. The site evaluations and project development process will be based upon creating conditions to emphasize natural form and function. Functional authenticity is at the center of sustainable restoration design and will be adhered to throughout the project, in order to design and construct habitat structure and complexity that is not “over-engineered.”
- **Community-Based.** The mission of the Niagara Greenway Commission represents an evolution of regional resource planning and management. This Strategy proposal, in combination with the GLRI Niagara watershed proposal, is focused on the coordinated interaction of all stakeholders within the Niagara River watershed to identify and facilitate implementation of projects consistent within the existing Greenway restoration framework and current restoration projects. The Strategy integrates community-based decision making with regional planning to build a comprehensive, systematic approach to improving habitat quality and resiliency of natural habitats. This proposal, if implemented, will empower public- and private-sector stakeholders to link projects that improve biological and social health in both compromised and relatively unimpaired biotic systems.

- **Partnerships.** The project described herein will include the development of a system that focuses on actively engaging partners and stakeholders to support sustainability of the effort itself and enhance the environmental sustainability of the region. Building on the existing collaborative network of habitat restoration specialists, and proactively opening up the process to any other stakeholder that has similar interests and intentions, brings credibility to the effort and lays the foundation for successful implementation.

Consistency with Criteria

In addition to consistency with Greenway’s principles, as described above, the Strategy will also be consistent with the following criteria:

- **Priority Status.** The project focuses on the restoration and enhancement of aquatic and riparian habitat features within the Niagara River ecosystem that will benefit various floral and faunal species and increase ecological capacity within the Greenway. We expect that the specific values of this project will include items such as increases in biological and habitat diversity, an increase in habitat values and functions, and the continuing management and control of invasive species. The priority of this project is clear, given the timing of other related efforts around the Great Lakes and within the western New York region, and given the levels of funding that will be available in the near future for restoration projects (see **Regional Importance of Project** above).
- **Environmental Soundness.** Strategy development will lead to coordinated project planning, design, and implementation that will restore ecological functions and habitat connectivity. Potential projects will be identified and the concepts will be developed. The project concepts will be evaluated in the context of the larger Greenway area and Niagara River ecosystem.
- **Implementability.** The project stakeholders will screen potential restoration locations for feasibility based on the ability and willingness of the entities that control the properties to participate in a restoration project. A screening process similar to that described in the *Draft Feasibility Study for Buffalo River, Appendix F—Ecology Engineering Evaluation Report Buffalo River, New York*, will be used. Site-specific projects will be evaluated based, in part, on the likelihood of implementation. Extensive support from collaborating agencies, organizations, and other stakeholders will facilitate the overcoming of potential obstacles to implementation.
- **Economic Viability.** Economic viability ensures that projects will be sustainable to the sponsors, stakeholders, and municipalities over the long-term horizon. Both upfront capital construction and long-term life-cycle operation and maintenance (O&M) costs need to be covered by sufficient funds. This will ensure that the proposed projects meet agreed-upon ecological, restoration, and integrity goals and do not burden the sponsors, but rather provide successive generations with the quality of life and environmental benefits envisioned by these projects. With the loss of

population and deindustrialization, the Niagara Frontier region is focused on leveraging its natural resource and environmental asset base.

Ecological restoration and renewal projects targeted within the Greenway will result in enhancing and preserving the ecosystem structures and habitats that create the recurring ecological services provided by these assets. These assets and services are vital to sustaining natural resources that attract global visitors and provide for world-class recreational experiences. The region's key location and large endowment of natural resource assets benefits tourism, in particular eco-tourism and visitation based on historic cultural amenities. The Greenway Corridor is a natural extension of the primary Niagara Falls/Great Lakes trip, and visitation can be leveraged (i.e., increase number of visitor days and length of stay) by restoration projects along the Niagara River and vicinity. External spending from tourism sustains the region and can be increased through environmental restoration projects and the long-term stewardship that the projects would address.

In addition, improvements in environmental quality can lead to enhanced property values as the Greenway corridor assets are restored and improved. Municipalities hosting Greenway natural resource assets can benefit fiscally from environmental restoration projects. These improvements in asset quality raise the quality of life and living standards of residents and are a magnet for new residents to relocate to areas and neighborhoods adjacent to the Greenway.

- **Local Sponsor or Partners.** See response to application Question 4 below (i.e., *“4. Describe the measures taken at the local level to gain community and government support for this project (hearings, petitions, public surveys, resolutions of support or other methods).”*)
- **Ability to Match or Leverage Funds.** Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper firmly believes that any entity that receives funding from the New York Power Authority (NYPA) Greenway Fund has a moral obligation to the community to leverage those funds for additional local, state, federal, or private resources in order to provide additional economic and environmental benefit to the Niagara River. Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper and our partners will seek out funding for habitat restoration implementation using NYPA evaluation/assessment funds as a local match.

Possible sources include the GLRI; Great Lakes Legacy Act; New York State (NYS) Department of State, Coastal Zone Management funds; NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), Environmental Protection Fund; United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); USACE Remedial Action Plan Program; and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. Among these funding sources, potential opportunities exist, such as federal appropriations for environmental restoration projects and funding instruments that can be applied to environmental restoration and investments (e.g., Build America Bonds), among others. In addition, funding sources available within the Great Lakes Basin (earmarked for GLRI initiatives) are also potential sources. The leveraged funding strategy will be

developed at a very opportune time due to significant increases in funding of Great Lakes-related programs by the federal government. In addition, combinations of grants and federal, state, local, and private funding sources will be used to optimize development of a financial package that sustains the environmental assets at the lowest cost to taxpayers.

- **Consideration of Other Planning Efforts.** The project proposed herein is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan and is complementary to Greenway Habitat Improvement Projects. There are many planning efforts underway for Niagara River habitats and species, including the NYSDEC open space plan; Niagara River RAP; the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation biodiversity studies; and the Niagara River IBA habitat characterization. This project will provide the means to coordinate planning efforts and provide consistency for evaluating restoration projects. This project will also provide tools such as shared methodologies and protocol that will support future project applicants in planning and securing funding for their projects.

In addition, this project will advance the preliminary habitat assessment work that was conducted between 2006-2008 by Riverkeeper and its partners under the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation-funded project “Buffalo and Niagara River Habitat Assessment and Conservation Framework.” Through the 2006-2008 Habitat Assessment project, the project collaborators accomplished the following: they identified baseline data and data gaps for the Niagara watershed at a macro-view of the Niagara River watershed; they developed habitat “delisting targets and restoration goals” for both the Buffalo and Niagara River AOCs; and finally, they identified “Habitat Opportunity Areas” for restoration, protection, and rehabilitation within and outside of the AOCs. The logical step after this preliminary screening effort is to conduct the tasks outlined in the Strategy, in order to position these projects for implementation funding.

- **Clear Benefits.** The proposed project will significantly improve the regional environment by enhancing or restoring critical ecological functions and processes to degraded aquatic and riparian habitats. The region will also benefit from the creation of a regional framework and system that will be used to track progress over time and establish an innovative monitoring protocol. Benefits resulting from this project include enhanced sustainability, increased river access, improvements in quality of life and regional economic outlook, and the fostering of stewardship.

Additional Project Element Supporting the Niagara River Greenway Vision, Principles, Goals, and Criteria

- **Environmental Education and Stewardship.** Environmental education and community stewardship are key components of the Strategy. The Strategy will provide opportunities for community involvement in site selection, conceptual planning, restoration design, and public presentations.

The Strategy will build upon stakeholder involvement in the planning stages by developing project stewardship components for specific existing and proposed project sites. The Strategy will empower stakeholders to take ownership of natural resources in their respective communities. The objective is to promote widespread interest in resource restoration during the conceptual planning stages, the benefits of which can be manifested in stakeholder involvement in post-project O&M by representative groups such as scouting organizations, fish and birding organizations, neighborhood-based groups, and others interested in habitat restoration. There are several models of community stewardship for restoration sites in the region, and they will serve as examples to learn from, both strengths and weaknesses.

3. Define the budget for the proposed project and include costs for the following:*

Planning	\$ 346,871
Construction	\$ 0
Acquisition	\$ 0
Regional Habitat Restoration Coordinator	\$ 125,000
Operation and Maintenance/Year	\$ 0
TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$ 471,871

* Details supporting the estimate of costs for this project are provided in Attachment B.

Identify all sources of funding and the amount of funding expected from each source. Identify and quantify funds that are already on hand or have been allocated for the proposed project. Explain how the project will be operated and maintained.

The project co-sponsors for this proposal consists of Riverkeeper and E & E. The stakeholders involved in the months of conversation leading up to this application have all requested that the regional Habitat Restoration Coordinator be managed by Riverkeeper, but report back to the Collaborative. Riverkeeper serves as the convening organization for the purposes of communicating, collaborating, and moving the Strategy forward. E & E will support the project by providing technical expertise for project-related mapping, habitat site evaluations, establishment of the habitat restoration database, and community outreach and collaboration meetings. All stakeholders and partners will be directly involved in developing the Strategy.

4. Describe the measures taken at the local level to gain community and government support for this project (hearings, petitions, public surveys, resolutions of support or other methods). If this project has been cited or described in a local planning document or some equivalent thereof, attach copies of that documentation highlighting the sections that are relevant to the proposed project. Describe the

role of municipal agencies, stakeholder groups, consultants, volunteers, or others who will be involved in the proposed project.

As described briefly above in response to Question 1, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has developed the concept for the Strategy by reaching out to various stakeholders to discuss the need for a centralized regional approach for habitat restoration. Three separate meetings were held during the fall and winter of 2009 to refine ideas and the approach. The meetings were supplemented by numerous telephone discussions, conference calls, and e-mail correspondence. The feedback from those involved to date demonstrates that a substantial amount of support for this project exists, since the stakeholders view the Strategy as not only a comprehensive approach for regional habitat restoration planning and implementation but also a process by which to track and best capitalize on future funding opportunities. The following stakeholders have participated in the preliminary discussions about this project (see Attachment A for letters of support):

- Tift Nature Preserve;
- NYSDEC;
- USFWS;
- Erie County Department of Environment and Planning;
- Forest Lawn Cemetery;
- Great Lakes Angler Association; and
- Buffalo Audubon.

The development and implementation of this project have been scoped in such a way as to incorporate communication, collaboration, and coordination throughout the life of the effort. The process will be open and will encourage the participation of any interested stakeholder within the region, including private citizens, citizen groups, natural resource agencies, and municipalities.

5. *Describe and document the environmental setting and existing conditions at the proposed project site. If you are not the owner of the property include a letter(s) or resolution(s) evidencing support for the project by the owner. Provide photographs, conceptual plans, and drawings that show the site as it presently exists and how the site will change with the addition of the proposed project. Describe how your project will comply with the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR). The existence of wetlands, significant upland and aquatic habitats, and plant or animal species that are classified as rare, threatened, or endangered should be noted. Explain how such natural resources will be protected and/or enhanced. Cite any relevant project-related studies.*

Project Setting and Existing Conditions

The Niagara River Greenway, as defined in the *Niagara River Greenway Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement*, encompasses the riparian terrestrial and aquatic resources which are the subject of the Strategy (see Figure 1 above). The upper-river fishery and riparian corridor contains a landscape that is characterized by a mosaic of residential, commercial, parkland, and industrial land use. Habitat form and function

within the upper river is impacted by a combination of infrastructure, contamination, and invasive species. The Niagara River corridor is a globally significant migratory flyway for many species of neotropical migrants, raptors, and waterfowl and is home to resident game and non-game species of birds.

The Greenway focus area includes significant areas of aging or obsolete industrial infrastructure; a highly modified natural environment with historic and ongoing anthropogenic stressors; and a fragmented, but globally significant, biotic environment. Habitat in the region has been adversely impacted by industrial activity and environmental degradation, including the release of toxic materials and the dredging and filling of riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats. Both the Niagara River and Buffalo River AOCs are within the project area. Development of the focus area watersheds has resulted in additional damage to aquatic, riparian, wetland, and upland habitats, including channel modifications and the release of sediment and pollutants from upstream areas, thereby further compromising habitat in the focus area. The Strategy proposed herein will facilitate restoration of the disturbed or degraded habitats in the focus area and provide ecological connections to upstream enhancement and restoration projects.

Ownership

Ownership of land that may be the subject of future restoration projects will be identified and evaluated with respect to its impact on the feasibility of implementing future projects. Any constraints will be noted and will be factored into the screening and evaluation of project locations.

How the Project Will Change the Project Area

As a result of implementing the Strategy, stakeholders in the region will be able to develop and implement restoration projects in better coordination with other efforts. The Strategy will support stakeholders in developing restoration projects and identifying, leveraging, and obtaining funding. In addition, by using the Strategy, stakeholders should be able to plan projects more effectively, in context with other projects, thereby improving compatibility so that projects complement other projects and multiply ecological benefits.

Habitats and Species of Concern

The Niagara River Greenway includes a variety of aquatic and terrestrial habitats with many distinct flora and fauna community types. A partial list of resources—as compiled from the NYS Natural Heritage Program of Ecological Community Types and NYSDEC wetland types—that occur within the Greenway includes:

- Backwater slough,
- Calcareous talus slope woodland,
- Deep emergent marsh,
- Shallow emergent marsh,
- Floodplain forest,

- Forested wetland, and
- Maple-basswood rich mesic forest.

Many herpetofauna, as well as floral and other faunal species, occur within the Greenway and Strategy project area that would be the subject of habitat restoration site planning for targeted wildlife species. NYSDEC, the National Wetlands Inventory, and the NYPA Niagara River restoration program Habitat Improvement Project (HIP) have each documented existing wetland and upland habitat areas and potential candidates for habitat restoration or enhancement.

The Strategy may include features such as open water, riverine islands, or riparian areas. In addition, the Strategy will provide distinct planning products for riparian and inland areas by watershed, including primary and secondary tributaries, wetlands, and other natural resources associated with the Niagara River. Information contained in existing restoration planning documents, reports, studies, community master plans, and planned or completed resource restoration projects will be integrated into the Strategy for Greenway restoration planning. Recent reports from Riverkeeper and its partners (*Buffalo and Niagara Rivers Habitat Assessment and Conservation Framework*) and other agency habitat site assessments will be expanded in scope and scale to address Greenway and its regional habitat restoration needs. Specifically, the Strategy will coordinate the investigation and development of opportunities to complement the eight existing HIP work areas in the form of expansion, replication, or connectivity with new restoration sites.

Attachment A
LETTERS OF SUPPORT

BUFFALO AUDUBON SOCIETY, INC.

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY EVENTS ON LINE AT WWW.BUFFALOAUDUBON.ORG

1610 WELCH ROAD NORTH JAVA, NEW YORK 14113 (585) 457-3228 (800)-377-1520 FAX: (585) 457-1378



est. 1909

Niagara River Greenway Commission
c/o Robert Kresse, Commission Chairman
Beaver Island State Park
2136 W. Oakfield Road
Grand Island, NY 14072

Re: Letter of Support for the “Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy” application

Dear Mr. Kresse,

I am writing to express the Buffalo Audubon Society’s support for the above noted application to the Niagara River Greenway Fund. Buffalo Audubon Society has been closely allied with Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper for several years now on many fronts, and our organizations have collaborated in an initiative known as *Our Water Future*, which seeks to dramatically improve public awareness and stewardship of the Niagara River and its environs.

Buffalo Audubon has identified protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and Niagara Rivers as a primary strategic priority, we strongly supported the development of the Niagara Greenway Plan, and we are very interested in the realization of the Greenway vision. In association with the National Audubon Society and many other partners, Buffalo Audubon is also responsible for the Globally Important Niagara River Important Bird Area, and is involved in a number of other partnerships and programs that would benefit from improvements to the ecologic integrity of the Niagara.

We believe that the development of a comprehensive, collaborative strategy for the restoration of habitats within the corridor is vital to the success of long term efforts to restore and protect the Niagara River system. Given its experience, capacity, expertise, and strong connections to the environmental community, we believe that there is no organization, public or private, that is better situated to lead the development of a Niagara River Regional Restoration Strategy than the Buffalo Niagara RIVERKEEPER. We strongly encourage the Commission to find this proposal consistent with the Greenway Plan, and we look forward to working closely with RIVERKEEPER in its development.

Sincerely,

William L. Hudson

Executive Director

Buffalo Audubon Society; Inc.



The Forest Lawn Group of Cemeteries

"The Most Beautiful Places to Celebrate a Life"

CEMETERY | CREMATORY | MAUSOLEUM SERVICES

1411 Delaware Avenue

Buffalo, NY 14209

Phone 716-885-1600 | Fax 716-881-6482

Joseph P. Dispenza
President

January 15, 2010

Mr Rob Belue, Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway Commission
Beaver Island State Park
2136 West Oakfield Road
Grand Island, New York 14072

Re: Greenway Grant Application for Scajaquada Creek Restoration and Related Enhancements within Forest Lawn Cemetery and Delaware Park, City of Buffalo.

Dear Mr. Belue

On behalf of the Forest Lawn Cemetery and the Olmsted Parks Conservancy, I am honored and excited to submit this Application for Greenway Funds for the restoration, enhancement and improvement of the portion of Scajaquada Creek from the Main Street culvert through Forest Lawn Cemetery and Delaware Park.

What we are proposing is to begin the process of removing sediments, silt islands, obstructions, invasive species, and stabilizing streambanks with natural native species. The larger program will eventually include designing and construction a wetland complex along Hoyt Lake to improve water quality as well as potentially opening up culverted portions portions of Scajaquada Creek to daylight. This program as currently proposed will result in near-term significant tangible results that will be realized by the public within Delaware Park and Forest Lawn Cemetery and also will result in improved water quality and restoring natural flows from Scajaquada Creek into the Niagara River

The attached Application lays out in detail what is being proposed and the benefits it will bring. I do want to note that we are having discussions with the Erie County/Olmsted Standing Committee about their consideration of this program in advance of their next cycle in December 2010. If that is not successful, Forest Lawn may separate elements of this Application within Forest Lawn property and propose this portion of the work to the Ecological Standing Committee in order not to lose a year of time. It is so important to the Forest Lawn Board of Directors that we initiate this program as soon as possible, we want to gain your Consistency Determination while we simultaneously evaluate all funding sources.

If you should have any questions, please call me at (716) 885-1600.

Regards,



Joseph Dispenza

CC: Thomas Herrera Mishler, Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy

E-mail flc@forest-lawn.com | www.forest-lawn.com



1020 Humboldt Parkway

Buffalo, New York

14211-1293

Phone (716) 896-5200

Fax (716) 897-6723

www.buffalomuseumofscience.org

January 14, 2010

Niagara River Greenway Commission
Beaver Island State Park
2136 W. Oakfield Road
Grand Island, NY 14072

Re: Support for the "Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy"

Dear Niagara River Greenway Commission:

I am writing to express the support of the Buffalo Museum of Science for Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's application titled "Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy". Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper is a committed organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Niagara River Watershed.

Between 2006 and 2008, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper took the first steps towards restoration master planning by coordinating over 30 Niagara region stakeholders through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) effort, "*Buffalo and Niagara Rivers Habitat Assessment and Conservation Framework*." The Buffalo Museum of Science-Tifft Nature Preserve Ecologist, David Spiering, was a member of the Technical Advisory Committee for this *Habitat Assessment*. *Habitat Assessment* project collaborators identified baseline data and data gaps for the Niagara watershed, developed habitat "delisting targets and restoration goals" for both the Buffalo and Niagara River AOCs, and further identified "Habitat Opportunity Areas" for restoration, protection and rehabilitation within and outside of the AOCs.

However, the *Habitat Assessment* was just the start of the work needed to restore the entire Niagara River Watershed. This project will build on the work already done and expand the scope of restoration planning since Riverkeeper will also be applying for a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding to parallel the Niagara River Greenway proposal. The GLRI funds will capture the areas within the Niagara River watershed that are outside the "Greenway Focus Area".

We encourage the Greenway Commission to deem this project "consistent" with the goals of the Niagara River Greenway, and allow this application to proceed on its merits and the partners to apply for needed funding to make the Restoration Strategy complete for the Niagara River watershed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Mortenson".

Mark Mortenson
President & CEO
Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences





NIAGARA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

4487 Lake Avenue • Lockport, NY 14094

Telephone (716) 434-4949

Fax (716) 434-4985

www.niagaraswcd.com

Niagara River Greenway Commission
Beaver Island State Park
2136 W. Oakfield Road
Grand Island, NY 14072

Re: Letter of Support for the "Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy" application

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express the support of Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District (NCSWCD) for Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's application titled "Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy". Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has a proven track record of coordinating large scale restoration planning and implementation, and is the leading environmental organization in Western New York dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Niagara River Watershed.

Between 2006 and 2008, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper took the first steps towards restoration master planning by coordinating over 30 Niagara region stakeholders through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) effort, "*Buffalo and Niagara Rivers Habitat Assessment and Conservation Framework*." In addition, Riverkeeper is currently working with the USEPA-Great Lakes National Program Office on a Buffalo River Habitat Master Plan process that has been initiated to parallel Riverkeeper's Buffalo River Great Lakes Legacy Act agreement for contaminated sediments.

Through the 2006-08 *Habitat Assessment* project, the project collaborators identified baseline data and data gaps for the Niagara watershed, a macro view of the Niagara River watershed, developed habitat "delisting targets and restoration goals" for both the Buffalo and Niagara River AOCs, and further identified "Habitat Opportunity Areas" for restoration, protection and rehabilitation within and outside of the AOCs.

NCSWCD supports and administers various habitat improvement projects in the Niagara River watershed and feels this project is a significant next step in identifying and addressing habitat issues within the Niagara River Corridor. As an agency that is dedicated to the protection and conservation of our natural resources, we feel the proposed project to protect and restore the physical and biological integrity of the Niagara River ecosystem is vital to the health of the Niagara River Corridor.

NCSWCD has been involved with Riverkeeper on many habitat related efforts. For instance, we have provided assistance via the Riverkeeper led initiative to restore water quality and critical habitat in the Cayuga/Berkholtz Creek Watershed. We are also a project partner and support the Riverkeeper's Niagara River Landowner Habitat Restoration Program. NCSWCD is also pledging its supports to this collaborative effort for the following reasons:

- 1) It is important to advance our goal of the protection and conservation of our local natural resources.
- 2) It will establish a framework within which habitat restoration projects throughout the Niagara Greenway can be evaluated, prioritized, and developed in coordination with other projects.
- 3) It will significantly improve the regional environment by enhancing or restoring critical ecological functions and processes to altered and degraded aquatic and riparian habitats in the Niagara River Corridor.

We strongly encourage the Greenway Commission to deem this project "consistent" with the goals of the Niagara River Greenway, and allow this application to proceed on its merits and the partners to apply for needed funding to make the Restoration Strategy complete for the Niagara River watershed.

Sincerely,

Victor DiGiacomo
RAP Coordinator

Attachment B

**SUMMARY INFORMATION SUPPORTING PROJECT
COST**

Table B-1: SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT TEAM, ANTICIPATED STAFF, AND ESTIMATED COSTS BY TASK

Niagara River Greenway Regional Restoration Strategy	
<i>Summary Breakdown: Project Team</i>	<p>The Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper (Riverkeeper) will be working closely with Ecology and Environment Engineering, P.C., in association with Ecology and Environment, Inc., (E & E) to design and implement the Strategy, as described in the Niagara River Greenway Commission application. Riverkeeper will be tasked with the position of the Regional Habitat Restoration Coordinator and will focus on outreach with all stakeholders within the region. We expect that 50 organizational and interactive meetings will be held over the course of two years, including four large milestone-related meetings and numerous information transfer meetings with agencies, citizen groups, and others. E & E/EEEEPC will support the Coordinator throughout the process by preparing for and attending the meetings, assisting with Web site creation for this project, preparing factsheets, and other activities as appropriate. The Coordinator will report to the appropriate Greenway Standing Committee on a regular basis.</p> <p>E & E will support the rest of the Strategy process by developing and accomplishing numerous tasks, as listed below.</p>
<i>Anticipated Project Team Staff</i>	<p>The Habitat Restoration Coordinator will be supported by Riverkeeper. E & E/EEEEPC anticipates that the staff will include (but may not be limited to): ecologists, biologists, public involvement specialists, information technology (IT) specialists, GIS analysts, environmental scientists, economists, cultural resource specialists, engineers, planners, and graphics illustrators.</p>
<i>Estimate of Costs By Task</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Task 1: Support of Position of Regional Habitat Restoration Coordinator (\$125,000 for two years) —Technical Assistance to Restoration Coordinator/Stakeholder Involvement (\$103,994) ▪ Task 2: Project Scope, Goals, and Objectives (\$7,977). ▪ Task 3: Determine Restoration Needs within the Greenway Focus Area (\$84,245). ▪ Task 4: Develop Site-Specific Restoration Projects (\$51,171). ▪ Task 5: Categorize Potential Projects (\$23,051). ▪ Task 6: Develop Monitoring and Maintenance Methodology (\$24,258). ▪ Task 7: Write and Distribute Strategy Document (\$52,174).

Attachment 3

ADDITIONAL LETTERS OF SUPPORT



Western New York Chapter (068)

Niagara River Greenway Commission
c/o Robert Kresse, Commission Chairman
Beaver Island State Park
2136 W. Oakfield Road
Grand Island, NY 14072

Re: Letter of Support for the “Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy” application

Dear Mr. Kress:

I am writing to express the support of Western New York Trout Unlimited for Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper’s application titled “Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy”. As a chapter in the nation’s preeminent coldwater fisheries conservation group, we are solidly behind Riverkeeper’s efforts in this project. We have been involved for several years with Riverkeeper and its efforts to improve habitat and the environment within the watersheds of the Buffalo and Niagara Rivers. It is clearly important to the health and welfare of both the people of this area, and the fisheries, that the best group be chosen for this. Over the course of its existence Riverkeeper has proven time and again to be at the forefront of environmental issues and solutions in the Buffalo and Niagara River watersheds. Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has a proven track record of coordinating large scale restoration planning and implementation.

Between 2006 and 2008, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper took the first steps towards restoration master planning by coordinating over 30 Niagara region stakeholders through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) effort, “*Buffalo and Niagara Rivers Habitat Assessment and Conservation Framework*.” In addition, Riverkeeper is currently working with the USEPA-Great Lakes National Program Office on a Buffalo River Habitat Master Plan process that has been initiated to parallel Riverkeeper’s Buffalo River Great Lakes Legacy Act agreement for contaminated sediments.

Through the 2006-08 *Habitat Assessment* project, the project collaborators identified baseline data and data gaps for the Niagara watershed, a macro view of the Niagara River watershed, developed habitat “delisting targets and restoration goals” for both the Buffalo and Niagara River AOCs, and further identified “Habitat Opportunity Areas” for restoration, protection and rehabilitation within and outside of the AOCs.

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper will also applied for a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding to parallel a NYPA Greenway funded project. The GLRI funds will capture the areas within the Niagara River watershed that currently outside of the “Greenway Focus Area”.

WNYTU is a coldwater fisheries conservation group, one of the local chapters of the national Trout Unlimited organization. Our organization has been a stakeholder with Riverkeeper since the inception of this effort, and we feel this is the group most qualified to coordinate this strategy.

We strongly encourage the Greenway Commission to deem this project “consistent” with the goals of the Niagara River Greenway, and allow this application to proceed on its merits and the partners to apply for needed funding to make the Restoration Strategy complete for the Niagara River watershed.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Godfrey
Stream Projects Chair
Board Member
Past President



COUNTY OF ERIE

CHRIS COLLINS

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Niagara River Greenway Commission
c/o Robert Kresse, Commission Chairman
Beaver Island State Park
2136 W. Oakfield Road
Grand Island, NY 14072

Re: Letter of Support for the "Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy" application

Dear Chairman Kresse,

I am writing to express Erie County's support for Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's application titled "Niagara River Regional Habitat Restoration Strategy". Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper has a proven track record of coordinating large scale restoration planning and implementation, and is the leading environmental organization in Western New York dedicated to the protection and restoration of the Niagara River Watershed.

Between 2006 and 2008, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper took the first steps towards restoration master planning by coordinating over 30 Niagara region stakeholders through a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) effort, "*Buffalo and Niagara Rivers Habitat Assessment and Conservation Framework*." In addition, Riverkeeper is currently working with the USEPA-Great Lakes National Program Office on a Buffalo River Habitat Master Plan process that has been initiated to parallel Riverkeeper's Buffalo River Great Lakes Legacy Act agreement for contaminated sediments.

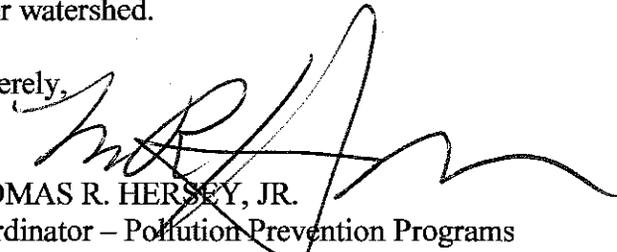
Through the 2006-08 *Habitat Assessment* project, the project collaborators identified baseline data and data gaps for the Niagara watershed, a macro view of the Niagara River watershed, developed habitat "delisting targets and restoration goals" for both the Buffalo and Niagara River AOCs, and further identified "Habitat Opportunity Areas" for restoration, protection and rehabilitation within and outside of the AOCs.

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper will has also applied for a Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding to parallel a NYPA Greenway funded project. The GLRI funds will capture the areas within the Niagara River watershed that currently outside of the "Greenway Focus Area".

The Erie County Department of Environment has partnered with Riverkeeper on many habitat and Great Lakes stewardship related efforts, was a member of the stakeholder group involved in the original development of this proposal. We support this collaborative effort and will continue to participate in the development of this regional strategy should Riverkeeper be approved for funding.

We strongly encourage the Greenway Commission to deem this project "consistent" with the goals of the Niagara River Greenway, and allow this application to proceed on its merits and the partners to apply for needed funding to make the Restoration Strategy complete for the Niagara River watershed.

Sincerely,



THOMAS R. HERSEY, JR.
Coordinator – Pollution Prevention Programs

Attachment 4

**MINUTES FROM THE 33RD MEETING OF THE NIAGARA
RIVER GREENWAY COMMISSION**

Minutes
The 33rd Meeting
Of the
Niagara River Greenway Commission
Beaver Island State Park
Grand Island, NY
March 16, 2010 3:00 pm

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robert Kresse at 3:07 pm. Executive Director Rob Belue was directed to call the roll and a quorum of members was determined to be present.

The following Commissioners or their designated representatives were in attendance:

Robert Kresse, Chairman
Paul Dyster, Vice-Chair & Chair Citizens Advisory Committee
Ron Pilozzi, Chair Local Government Advisory Committee
Ed McDonald, Commissioner
David Hahn-Baker, Commissioner
Mark Thomas, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
Russ Biss, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Christina Orsi, Empire State Development
Rob Daly, NYS Power Authority
Rob Belue, Executive Director Niagara River Greenway Commission

Absent: John Giardino, Commission Treasurer
Alice Roth, Commission Secretary
NYS-DOS
NYS-DOT

There were proxy votes for Commissioner Roth, DOS, and DOT.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the January 19th, 2010 meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Commissioner Ron Pilozzi, seconded by Commissioner Ed McDonald. The meeting minutes were then approved unanimously as submitted.

Comments from the Chairman

Chairman Robert Kresse noted that there was no one signed up for the public comment section on current agenda items for this meeting.

Public Comment- Current Agenda

There were no public comments.

Committee Reports

Financial Report/2010-2011 Budget

Executive Director Rob Belue gave the financial report on behalf of Treasurer John Giardino. As of February 28th the NHT balance was \$2,743.37. A deposit of \$300,000 was made on March 3rd thanks to Senator Thompson. The new balance is \$302,743.37. The expenses in the budget are for salaries, no part-time assistant, office supplies, postage, phone/fax, publications, media, equipment, rent, meetings, travel, web development, etc. The balance is out of \$250,000, with a \$50,000 fund balance left. Chairman Kresse commented that an increased budget allows the Niagara River Greenway Commission to increase public involvement and knowledge of the Niagara River Greenway. A motion to approve the report was made by Commissioner Paul Dyster and seconded by Commissioner Ron Pillozzi.

Paddles Up Niagara 2010 Update

Executive Director Rob Belue gave an update on Paddles Up 2010. This is the 5th Paddles Up Niagara and will be bigger and better than past years. The Boy Scouts of America in Western New York are on board to participate. There will be a poker run and sprint races added this year. At the boat show, the word was spread about the event and the Marine Division of Parks thru the National Association of Boating Law Administration will donate 50 life vests to be used in the raffle and as prizes. The event is set for July 24th.

Commission Emeritus Advisory

Chairman Kresse stated that the past Commissioners participating are Paul Leuchner and Richard Soluri.

Old Business

Project Consistency Review: Chairman Kresse asked the Executive Director to take over this part of the meeting. The Executive Director explained the procedures that would be followed for project review. First, he will provide a brief overview of each proposal and then invite the project sponsors to make a brief presentation. Following the presentation, Commission members will be able to ask questions. The process will conclude with a vote on consistency to the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Buffalo-Niagara Riverkeeper- Niagara Greenway Region Habitat Restoration Strategy

The project presentation was made by Jill Jedlicka. Commissioner Mark Thomas asked if the funding for full-time staff was long term or short term. Jill said it was for a two year plan. Commissioner David Hahn-Baker suggested the Jill look further down stream and for a funding source. Russ Biss asked after the two years who will house the information. Chairman Kresse called for a vote and the members were unanimous in their finding this project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Forest Lawn Heritage Foundation Charities & Buffalo Olmsted Parks Conservancy- Restoration & Rehabilitation of Scajaquada Creek

The project presentation was made by Joseph Dispenza, Donald Demeo, and Dan Castle. Commissioner Thomas asked what the lineage of the project was. Dan Castle said from Main Street to Delaware Park, about 7 miles. Commissioner David Hahn-Baker stressed this was a very

important project to be done. Commissioner Paul Dyster also was glad to see this project being done. Chairman Kresse called for a vote and the majority of members found this project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

Buffalo Audubon Society, Inc- Niagara River Greenway Environmental Education Program

The project presentation was made by William Hudson. Russ Biss said it is hard to connect with teachers and educators so how do they plan on doing that. William Hudson said that yes teachers are very busy but they would try a phone network and ???addresses to help get the word out. Russ Bliss also asked if the two year position of the coordinator will be extended and William Hudson said yes they want to keep it. Commissioner Mark Thomas is excited and supportive of the project. Chairman Kresse called for a vote and the majority of members found this project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

City of Tonawanda- Eastern Park Kayak/Canoe Launch

The project presentation was made by Mayor Ron Pilozzi and associates from Anchor Marine. Russ Biss asked if the docks are held in with pilings and how do you get them out. The presenters stated that they are held in with pilings and they are very easy to take out when needed. Commissioner David Hahn-Baker is looking forward to this project and Commissioner Mark Thomas said making the river accessible is a good thing. Chairman Kresse called for a vote and the majority of members found this project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

New Business

Chairman Kresse announced that David Hahn-Baker was appointed as the new Chair of the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Public Comment- Open Topics

Rose-Mary Warren: She wanted to know the protocol for submitting comments on a project in May.

Thomas Frank, Amherst, New York: Mr. Frank spoke on various subjects.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Commissioner Ed McDonald seconded by Commissioner Ron Pilozzi. The meeting adjourned unanimously at 4:21 pm.

Alice Roth, Secretary/Rob Belue, Executive Director
Niagara River Greenway Commission