

Activity #9: Stormwater Management

The federal Transportation Alternatives (TA) program funds 10 different types of transportation-related activities. Through activity 9, known as stormwater management, allows communities to decrease the negative impact of roads on the natural environment. Rainwater runoff washing over road surfaces carries pollutants into water supplies, endangering human health and the ecological balance of local streams and rivers. Projects funded in this category seek to reduce these environmental impacts. Since the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program began in 1992, approximately 1 percent of available TE/TA funds have been programmed for environmental mitigation projects.

Eligible Projects

Working within Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines, each state Department of Transportation (DOT) determines the eligibility of TA projects for funding. Examples of projects that may be considered eligible include:

- Detention and sediment basins;
- Stream channel stabilization;
- Storm drain stenciling and river clean-ups;
- Water pollution studies;

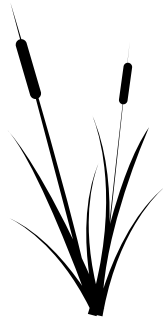
The definition for this category is less restrictive under the MAP-21 transportation bill (effective October 1, 2012) than under the previous SAFETEA-LU bill. Projects that were previously ineligible under SAFETEA-LU may be eligible under the new law.

Examples of Successful Projects



Searles Prairie Rogers, Arizona. In the early 1990s, the community of Rogers, Arkansas, faced the dilemma of preserving natural resources while accommodating development. The expansion of two existing highways and commercial and residential development created silt and chemical runoff that threatened to destroy nearby Searles Prairie. This ten acre tall grass prairie located adjacent to Highway 62 was one of the last remaining vestiges of north-

west Arkansas' native geography. Since the Rogers community considers Searles Prairie an important resource and educational tool for local schoolchildren, the potential for damage alarmed many people. In response, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission approached the Arkansas State Highway Agency about expanding the runoff mitigation required of roadway construction projects. Using a Transportation Enhancements award



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of \$671,426, highway engineers constructed a catch basin and laid underground pipes in the adjacent lands to divert excessive water and highway runoff away from the prairie.

Bartlett Brook Stormwater Treatment System, Vermont. Rainwater runoff from US Route 7 in South Burlington pollutes local streams that feed into Lake Champlain. The city of South Burlington and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources constructed a stormwater treatment system along Bartlett Brook to control the pollution. A \$112,600 TE award helped finance the system, which includes a restored stream channel and constructed wetland. Contact: City of South Burlington Planning Department, 802-846-4106.

Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/project_examples for additional project examples.

Federal Guidance

Projects that use TA funds must qualify as one or more of the 10 designated activities and be related to surface transportation in order to meet basic federal eligibility requirements. Past FHWA TE Guidance has required the following for environmental mitigation projects:

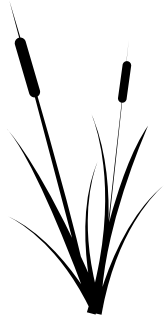
- Projects must go above and beyond environmental mitigation required in law for federal-aid highway projects.

Visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/guidance/guidetap.cfm> for a full copy of the FHWA TA Guidance.

Project Funding

Most states require TA project sponsors to provide at least 20 percent of project costs, also referred to as matching funds. In many states, the value of donated property, materials and services, the labor of state and local government employees, and the costs of preliminary engineering may count towards the matching requirement. Federal, non-DOT funds can often be used as matching funds. Check with your state TA manager whether these innovative financing options are available in your state. Additional funds for this activity may come from local and state governments, foundations, nonprofit organizations, businesses, or other federal sources.

Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/funding_sources for more suggestions on potential funding sources.



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Related Resources

- Federal Highway Administration, water quality and Critter Crossings Web sites: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/natural.htm
- The Center for Transportation and the Environment (North Carolina State University): 919-515-8893 or www.itre.ncsu.edu/cte
- Defender's of Wildlife Habitat and Highways Campaign: 202-682-9400 or www.defenders.org/habitat/highways/new/congress.html
- Western Transportation Institute, Montana State University: Offers a reference database focused on animal-vehicle collisions and mitigation options: www.coe.montana.edu/wti
- USDA forest service, Wildlife Crossings Toolkit: www.wildlifecrossings.info/beta2.htm

To Get Started

Inquiries about the TA application process should be directed to the TA manager at your state DOT. Visit www.ta-clearinghouse.info/contacts for TA manager contact information.