



Invasive Mussels Lake Monitoring Fund Program Guidelines

Introduction

The purpose of the Invasive Mussels Lake Monitoring Fund is to ensure lakes and rivers across the province of B.C. are actively sampled and monitored for the presence of invasive mussels. HCTF is administering this fund to provide support to various agencies and community organizations across the province to participate in the sampling of waterbodies. This program has and continues to be funded through contributions to HCTF from both the Province of B.C. and the federal government. Funds such as the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk and the Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention Fund, both administered by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, have provided financial support for this program. 2026 marks the eighth year of funding through the Invasive Mussel Lake Monitoring program.

This funding program has been conducted in partnership with the Province of B.C. Ministry of Water, Land, and Resource Stewardship (WLRS; previously Ministry of Environment) since the HCTF grant program started in 2018. WLRS annually publishes an updated BC Invasive Mussel Lake Monitoring Field Protocol, hereafter referred to as the Field Protocol.

There have been some changes to the protocol over the last year, including updates to the priority waterbodies list; please review the updated protocol in detail before completing your HCTF application.

Eligibility & Grant Information

Eligible Applicants

Invasive Mussels Lake Monitoring Grants are available to community groups, non-profit organizations, local and regional governments, First Nations, and others. For applicants to be successful, the application must demonstrate that they have proven experience, knowledge, and capacity to carry out the activities in the proposal. Activities may be conducted by paid staff, volunteers, or a combination, but the applicant must clearly demonstrate that they have the experience necessary to complete the proposed activities according to the sampling methods as outlined in the Field Protocol, including direct experience with waterbody sampling.

Eligible Waterbodies

The Field Protocol includes a list of priority waterbodies from which grant proponents must select waterbodies to sample. The waterbodies identified with a sampling frequency of bi-weekly in the Field Protocol are the highest priority. It's not expected that all the priority waterbodies within your region are selected for sampling. Please consider the additional cost vs. benefit of adding a given waterbody. If you plan to sample more than one or two additional waterbodies over what you have sampled in previous years, please contact the Province at Amalis.RieraVuibert@gov.bc.ca or Martina.Beck@gov.bc.ca to discuss before you submit your proposal. Rationale for including additional sites must be included as part of the proposal.

Eligible Activities and Expenses

This grant opportunity is available only for the following specific activities, as outlined in the Field Protocol, including:

- Collecting plankton tow water samples from waterbodies as identified by the Province to test for the presence of invasive mussel veliger larvae.
- Material costs to build substrate samplers to test for the presence of adult or juvenile zebra and quagga mussels. Substrate samplers may be deployed at locations where plankton tow samples are being taken or at other waterbodies opportunistically. The application does not require a list of locations where substrate samplers will be deployed; however, successful proponents will be asked for a list of waterbodies where substrate samplers were deployed in the Grant Report.
- Preserving, packaging, and mailing samples to the designated lab only.

Eligible expenses to complete the above activities include:

- Labour costs to pay employees and/or contractors to complete the plankton tow sampling
- Costs associated with supporting volunteers to complete the plankton tow sampling
- Equipment, materials and supplies directly relating to the plankton tow sampling work, as identified in the Field Protocol:
 - Sampling equipment (e.g., plankton net, preservative, sample containers, etc.)
 - Equipment and supplies required for equipment decontamination
 - Fuel costs for boats used for monitoring
 - GPS units, pH meter, pH strips, thermometer, and other technical equipment required with justification provided
- Materials costs to build substrate samplers
- Travel expenses for travel from the main place of business or boat storage location to the sampling sites. Note that HCTF pays mileage at a maximum of \$0.65 per km
- Costs for equipment and materials required for disinfecting boats and equipment between waterbodies
- Postage/courier costs for shipping samples to the lab
- Administration fee to cover overhead costs, maximum of 15%

Ineligible expenses

- Salary expenses for regular provincial government employees
- Any expenses unrelated to the sampling activities
- If an administration fee is charged, separate additional charges for overhead (photocopying, office space, etc.) are not eligible
- General volunteer recruitment expenses
- Training costs
- Labour, travel, and other expenses for substrate sampling

Note: WLRS will cover the costs associated with the analysis of all samples collected through this fund. As a result, these costs do **not** need to be included in the proposal budget. WLRS may need to limit the number of samples per application; this decision will depend on the number of applications received and total available funds. WLRS must be contacted regarding the cost of analyzing any additional plankton tow samples collected using additional funds (funds not provided by HCTF). WLRS is responsible for all communications with the laboratory, including



receiving lake monitoring results. WLRS must be contacted for the results from the laboratory analysis; the lab should not be contacted directly.

We are anticipating less funding this year (2026-2027 intake). Please take this into consideration when developing any lake monitoring protocols.

Grant Amount

There are no specific restrictions on the amount of funding that may be provided, but typical grants for this program are in the \$5-20k range. Requests significantly over \$20k will require a strong rationale.

Funding Period

This call for applications is for the 2026 field season only. We anticipate sending funding notifications in late March to early April 2026, and reports will be due November 30, 2026.

Application Information and Deadline

The Invasive Mussels Monitoring Grant will be on HCTF's online application system, Survey Apply, again for the 2026 grant cycle. The grant application worksheet and instructions will still be accessed via the HCTF website. The deadline for completed applications is **Friday, February 20, 2026, at 4:30 pm Pacific Time.**

Proposal Review

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

- The application aligns with the priority waterbody list and frequency of sampling provided in the current Field Protocol. Justification is provided for the proposed sample sites within the waterbody. Examples of information to support justification include the level of boating activity, proximity of the site to recreational infrastructure (boat launches, docks/marinas, campgrounds), and proximity to inflows and outflows.
- The application provides sufficient evidence that the proponent has the technical skills and knowledge, as well as the organizational capacity, to complete quality veliger sampling according to the Field Protocol. This includes detailing how the Field Protocol will be followed for all aspects of sample collection (plankton tow, preservation, equipment disinfection, and shipping of samples).
- The project budget is cost-effective and sufficient to complete the proposed activities. The cost per sample may be used to assess proposals.
- Proponents with funding from other sources, cash or in-kind, may score higher; however, matched funding is not a requirement.
- Letters of support are strongly recommended and must be recent (within the last two years) and from relevant experts/partners who can speak to the capacity of the organization to complete this type of work and will strengthen the application.

Funding Decisions and Grant Agreement

Notification of funding decisions should be available in late March to early April. Successful applicants must review and sign a funding agreement. An up-front payment of up to 70% of the grant will be made after both parties have signed the funding agreement. HCTF no longer



requires the submission of a certificate of insurance, but as per Section 9 of the Conditional Grant Agreement, all proponents must have appropriate insurance.

Reporting & Performance Measures

A final report detailing activities completed, samples collected, and costs incurred will be due on November 30th, 2026. Once this report is received and approved, the final grant payment will be made.

Questions?

Any questions about this funding opportunity should be directed to HCTF at grants@hctf.ca.