

Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Fund Program

Emily Nichols

ARM Fund Program Manager

March 23, 2026



ARM Fund Program Mission

The ARM Fund Program ensures that funds generated through In-Lieu Fee (ILF) mitigation payments for unavoidable impacts to wetlands, streams and other aquatic resources are used to fund projects that replace, restore, or protect aquatic resources within the same watershed.



Photographs of Restoration of Brennan Brook in Frankestown through the removal of a dam (top). and restoration of aquatic and hydrologic connectivity completed in 2024 (bottom).

Photo credits: Trout unlimited .

What is mitigation?

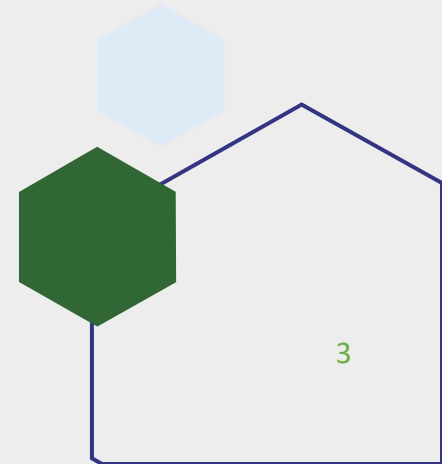
Mitigation is defined in NH wetland rules (Env-Wt 100) as activities or projects designed to offset the unavoidable permanent impacts to jurisdictional areas.

Mitigation is required after "avoidance and minimization" as part of the Wetland permit approval process. Applies when impact thresholds are passed.

Threshold Summary: $\geq 10,000$ SF, ≥ 200 LF, any impact to PRAs (vernal pools, bogs, tidal areas, prime, T&E habitat, ENC).



Photos courtesy of UNH (2023 Monitoring Report).



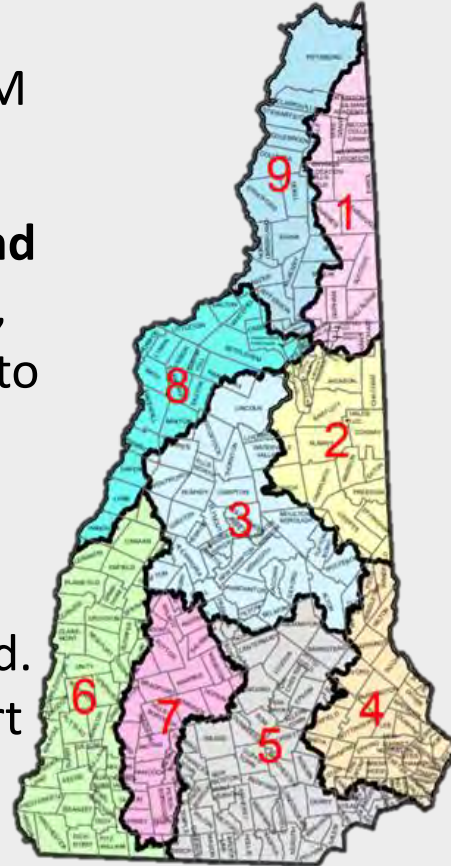
How does a permittee satisfy mitigation?

In Lieu Fee (ILF) Payment

Permittee makes a ILF payment to the ARM Fund.

Responsibility – Transfers to the ARM Fund Program (ILF program sponsor) to identify, support, and facilitate success of projects to offset lost functions and resources area.

Impact: Compensation is pooled by watershed and funds utilized to support compensatory mitigation within watershed. ILF payment must be received prior to start of construction.

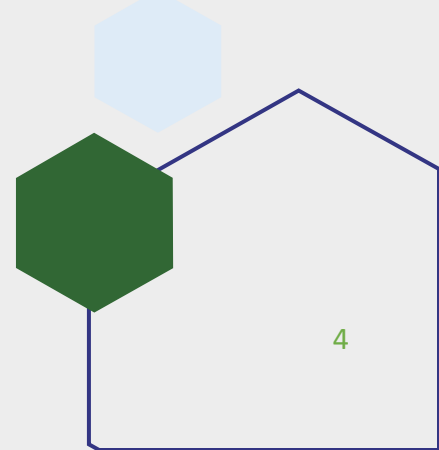


Permittee Responsible Mitigation (PRM)

Permittee provides a project to offset lost functions and resource area.

Responsibility- Permittee is responsible for the design, implementation, monitoring, and success of the mitigation project.

Impact: Impact loss is directly compensated onsite or off-site (same HUC10) and is completed during or prior to construction impacts.



How Does ILF Mitigation Work?

Unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources.



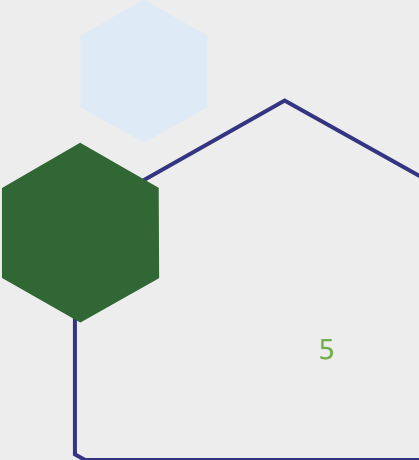
ILF payment to ARM Fund. ARM assumes responsibility for successful mitigation.



ARM awards funds to restoration / protection projects.



ARM funded projects generate mitigation credits to offset authorized losses (debits).



What qualifies as mitigation?



Restoration



**Enhancement/
Rehabilitation**



**Establishment
(creation)**



Preservation

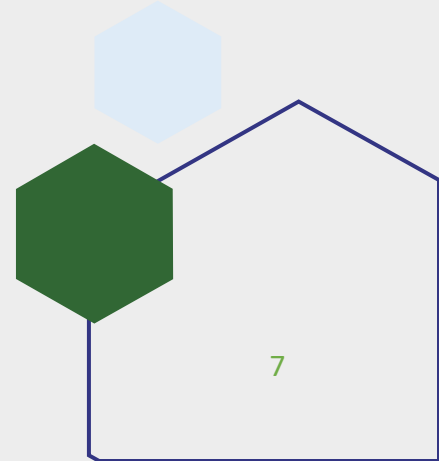


Restoration

An activity that returns natural or historic functions to a former or degraded aquatic resource resulting in an increase of aquatic resource acreage *and* function.

Location: Wetlands & Streams & Upland Buffers.

Examples: Remove fill, daylight stream, remove hard armoring, restore hydrologic connections, habitat restoration.



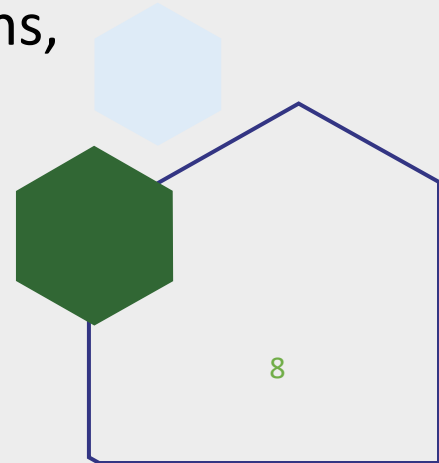


Enhancement

An activity that results in an increase/improvement to select aquatic resource function(s), *without* an increase in aquatic resource acreage.

Location: Wetlands & Streams & Upland Buffers.

Examples: re-establish native vegetation communities, restoring hydrologic connections, connect streams to floodplains, habitat enhancement.



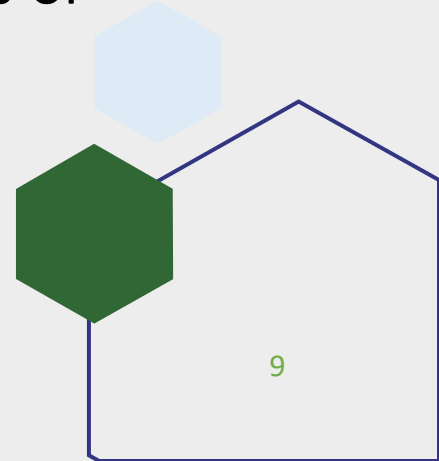


Establishment (creation)

The construction of an aquatic resource in an upland resulting in new self-sustaining aquatic resource acreage and function.

Location: Uplands

Examples: emergent, scrub-shrub or vernal pools



Preservation

Activities to protect and maintain aquatic resources and their upland buffers from future development (e.g. acquisition by fee-simple purchase by a municipality or conservation entity or conservation easements and deed restrictions).

Location: Wetlands & Streams & Upland Buffers.

- ✓ High functioning and "difficult to replace" aquatic resources.
- ✓ Supports critical linkages in landscape for connectivity and resiliency.
- ✓ Conservation interest area must be free from conflicting land uses that may affect long-term functions and sustainability.
- ✓ Include minimum of 100ft natural buffers on aquatic resource areas.
- ✓ Willingness to pursue restoration on parcel, if opportunities exist.
 - ✓ Threat of degradation and destruction.



What makes a good mitigation project?

Projects that will sustain important aquatic resource functions over the long term at the watershed scale

Occurs at the same location as the impacts or within the same watershed.

Provides net gain in aquatic resource acreage and/or functions.

Supports and restores critical linkages in landscape for connectivity and resiliency.

Reinforces priorities identified in local conservation, priority plans, and supports regional conservation efforts.

Provisions for 5+ years of annual performance monitoring and adaptive management.

Provides (existing or proposed) permanent protection and long-term stewardship of aquatic resources and project areas.

Includes financial assurances for site maintenance, adaptive management, and remedial actions to ensure project success.

Meets state (and if applicable federal) mitigation ratios & requirements.

Who can apply* to ARM?

- Municipalities (towns, counties, SAUs).
- County Conservation Districts.
- State Agencies.
- Watershed or River Associations.
- Non-profits.
- For-profit/private organizations.

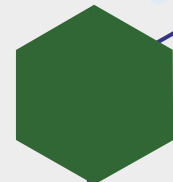


**Eligible entities must meet the terms and conditions required for Governor & Executive Council Approval.*

ARM Fund Eligible Expenditures

- ✓ Grant application and restoration concept design.
- ✓ Natural resource surveys, assessments, consultations.
- ✓ Design and Permitting.
- ✓ Project management and grant administration.
- ✓ Construction and material costs.
- ✓ Construction phase engineering/consulting oversight.
- ✓ As-built plans and reporting.
- ✓ Annual performance monitoring and reporting.
- ✓ Adaptive management and financial assurances.
- ✓ Land acquisition costs.
- ✓ Site protection & long-term management (stewardship).

Budget Category	ARM Funds Requested	Total Cost	Notes/Matching Funds/Sources
Engineering Design and Permitting			
Section 106 Consultation and Environmental Review			
Wetland Delineation and Functional Assessment / Stream Survey			
Materials			
Construction Contract Services			
Construction Oversight and Monitoring by Restoration Professional			
Record Drawings and As-built Reporting			
Project/Grant Management			
Performance Monitoring (five-year minimum)			
Financial Assurance for Maintenance			
Adaptive Management (<i>recommend at least 20% of total project cost</i>)			
Land or Easement Purchase			
Appraisal			
Property Survey			
Title Research, Opinion, Insurance			
Legal Services and Closing			
Real Estate Transfer Tax			
Baseline Documentation Report			
Environmental Assessment/Phase One - Hazardous Waste			
Project Management /Land Agent Cost			
Stewardship and Long-term Monitoring			
Other (<i>add in items and describe</i>)			
TOTAL PROJECT EXPENSES:			





ARM FUND GRANT PROCESS OVERVIEW

Application process and timeline for Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund grants

Spring

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

- ARM Fund publishes updated grant guidance and instructions, resources and events.
- Request for pre-proposals announced.
- ARM Fund hosts virtual office hour and conducts public outreach.

Late Spring/Summer

PRE-PROPOSAL

LATE MAY: Deadline for pre-proposals.

JUNE: Evaluation by ARM, Site Selection Committee (SSC) and Interagency Review Team (IRT).

Site visits with applicant.

JULY: Pre-proposal feedback and invitation to full application.

Fall/Winter

FULL APPLICATION

SEPTEMBER: Deadline for full application.

Issue public notice and request DHR screening.

OCTOBER: Site visits with applicant.

NOVEMBER: Evaluation by ARM, SSC and IRT.

IRT issues Initial Evaluation comments.

SSC ranks projects per scoring criteria and recommends funding awards to New Hampshire Wetlands Council.

DECEMBER: Wetlands Council approval.

December/January

SECURING AWARD

- Notice of funding decisions and award amounts.
- Project must be implemented within three years of award.

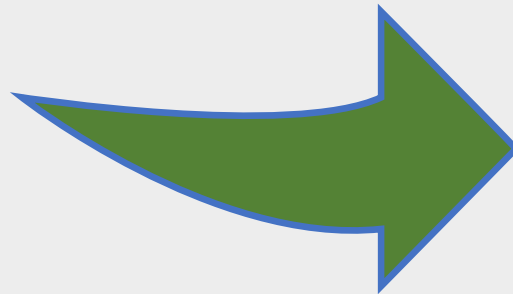
WHAT'S NEXT?

See other side

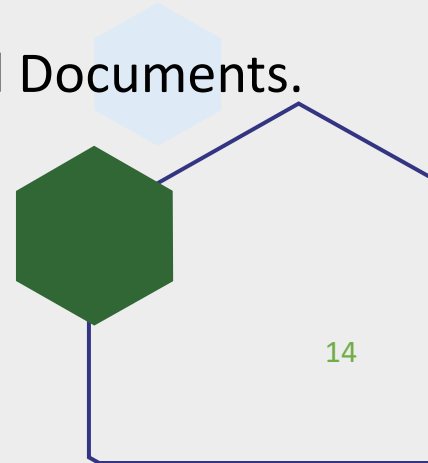


Where can I find more information?

[ARM Fund Program Website](#)



- Program Overview.
- ARM Project Dashboard.
- Grant Round Process.
- Project Criteria.
- Funding Availability.
- Application Materials.
- Budget Template.
- Checklist of Required Documents.
- FAQs.

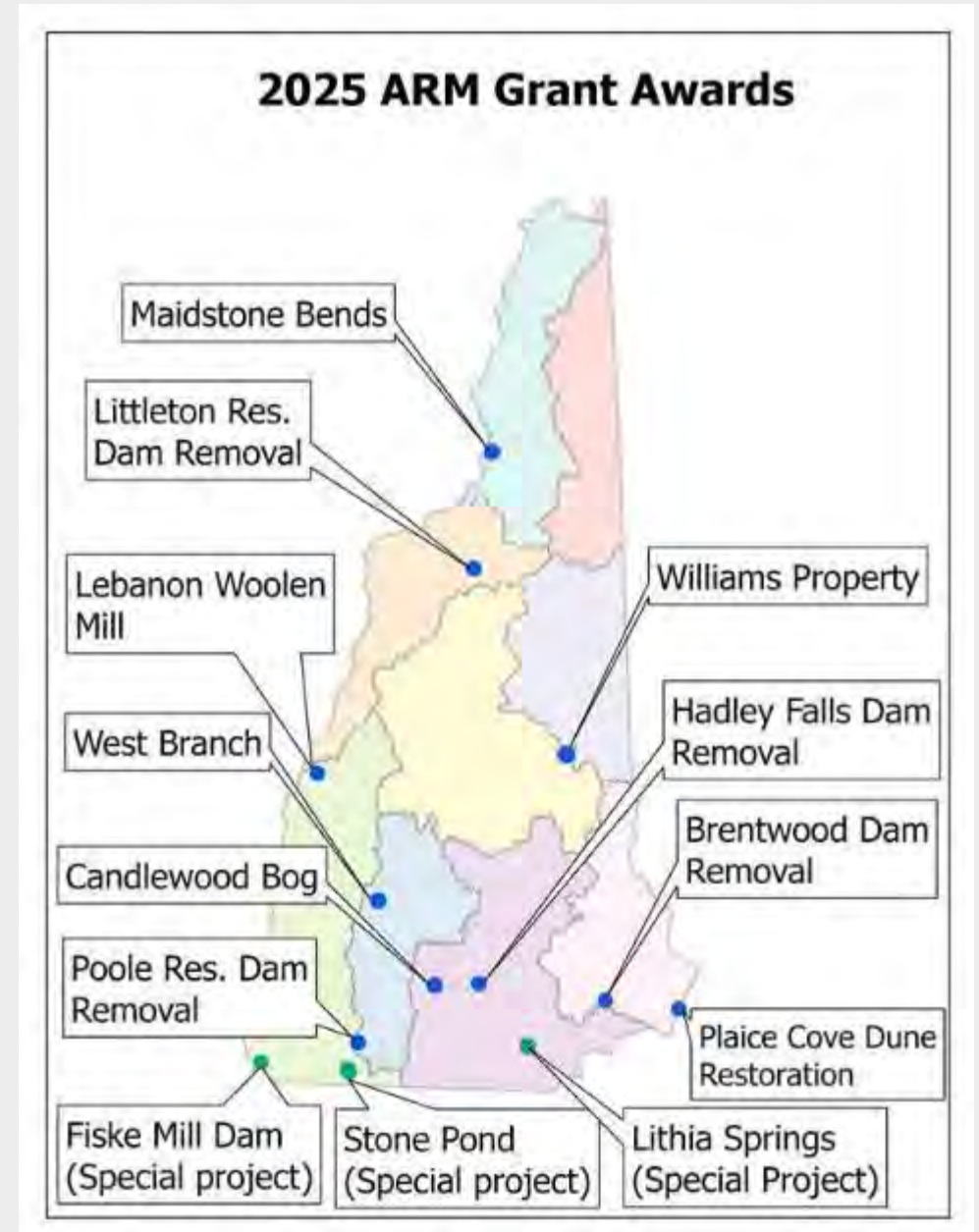


2025 ARM Grant Round

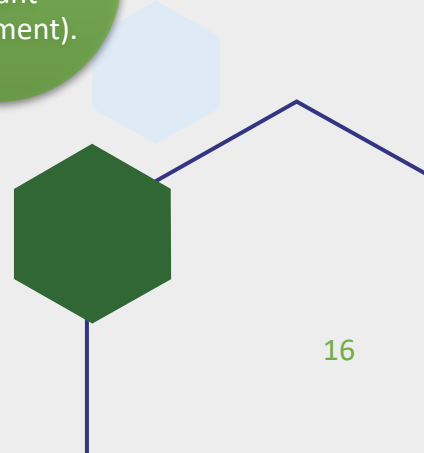
Awards = \$7.89 Million

Awarded Projects:

- Preservation of irreplaceable, high functioning bog/fen.
- Land acquisition projects with wetland & stream restoration.
- Floodplain wetland restoration.
- Sand dune restoration and salt marsh enhancement.
- Dam removal and stream restoration.
- Funds given to 4 previously- approved projects for completion.

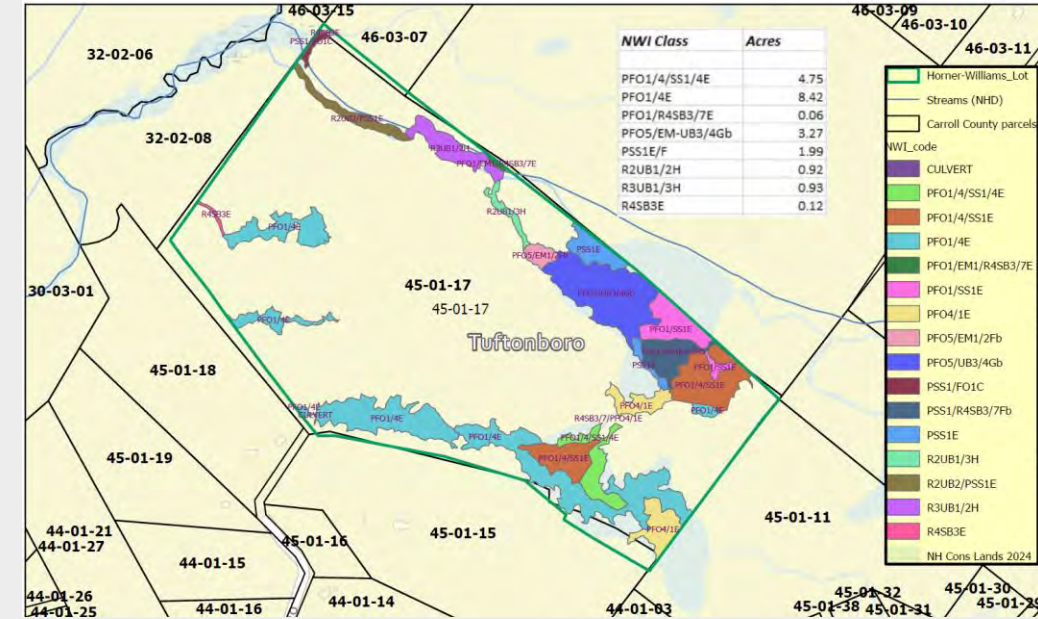
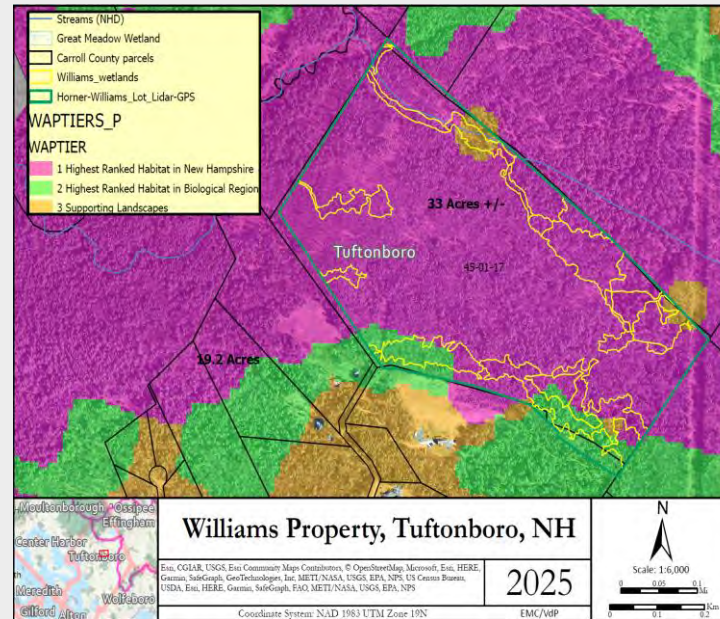


Life Cycle of an ARM Grant Project



2025 Grant Award: Pemigewasset-Winnepesaukee Service Area

Preservation + Enhancement

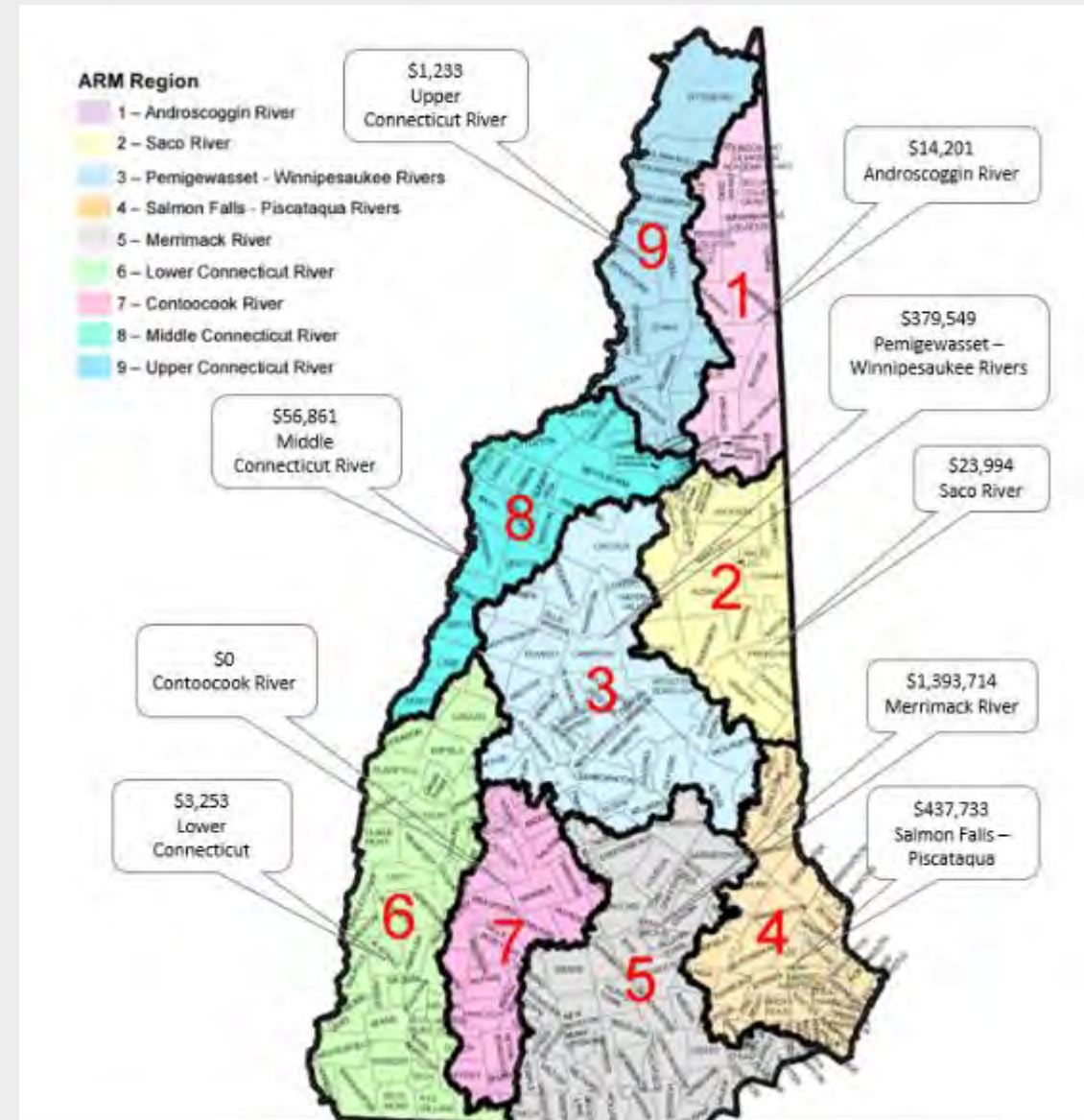


Applicant	Town of Tuftonboro			Project:	Williams Property (Horner Lot)
Total Project Cost:	\$240,000	ARM Award:	\$215,000	Service Area:	Pemigewasset-Winnepesaukee
Mitigation Activities	<p>Preservation: Permanent protection of 87.5 acres including approximately 18.5 acres of wetlands and 1945 LF stream frontage and riparian buffer, including WAP Tier 1 habitat, a beaver marsh, vernal pools and a tributary of Melvin River.</p> <p>Wetland Restoration/Enhancement: Two vernal pool enhancements will be performed (0.03 acres).</p> <p>Stream Restoration/Enhancement: 1,650 linear feet of stream enhancement through strategic wood additions.</p>				



Current Available Funds 2026

2026 LEDGER: AQUATIC RESOURCE LOSSES BY SERVICE AREA			
Service Area (Watershed)	Wetland Loss Acres	Stream Loss Linear Feet	Resource Type(s)
Androscoggin	0.0865	0	Non-tidal Wetlands
Contoocook	0.1106	225	Non-tidal wetlands, Riverine/Streams
Lower Connecticut	0.3721	34	Non-tidal wetlands, Riverine/Streams
Merrimack	5.8083	97	Non-tidal wetlands, Riverine/Streams, PRA Protected Species or Habitat, PRA Floodplain Wetlands Adjacent to Tier 3 Stream
Middle Connecticut	0.0585	0	Non-tidal wetlands
Pemigewasset-Winnepesaukee	0.0285	0	Non-tidal wetlands, PRA Floodplain Wetlands Adjacent to Tier 3 Stream
Saco	0	0.93	Riverine/ Streams, Non-tidal Wetlands, PRA-Floodplain
Salmon Falls-Piscataqua	2.5358	487	Non-tidal wetlands, Riverine/Streams, Tidal wetlands, PRA Tidal Waters, PRA Undeveloped TBZ, PRA Floodplain Wetlands Adjacent to Tier 3 Stream
Upper Connecticut	0.0367	0	Non-tidal Wetlands, PRA-Bogs, Riverine/Streams



2026 Funding Outlook and Process

- ❑ Spring 2027 is the next formal ARM Request for Proposals. This decision:
 - ❑ Supports ARM's obligation to successfully implement its approved projects in compliance with federal and state mitigation rules.
 - ❑ Allows service area funds to accrue to support future compensatory mitigation projects.
 - ❑ Supports strategic program developments including outreach, partnerships and processes.
- ❑ Pathway for Special Project Assistance will remain (more details to follow).



Hadley Falls Dam Removal, Merrimack River Service Area
photo credit: NHDES Dam Bureau.

Special Project Assistance (SPA) Process

- SPA pathway for projects outside the RFP process continues to be available through 2026.
- SPA pathway is outlined in the ARM Program Instrument.
- SPA requests will be reviewed on a rolling basis.
- Key Requirements:
 - Determined appropriate by ARM & USACE Mitigation Program.
 - The budget request must achieve completion of the project.
 - Demonstrate threat and urgency.
 - Occur in service area with sufficient funds.
 - Provide required application materials.
 - SPA requests subject to SSC, IRT, NH Wetlands Council and Governor & Executive Council Approval.

SPA Request Steps

Contact ARM to schedule a meeting to discuss project & eligibility.



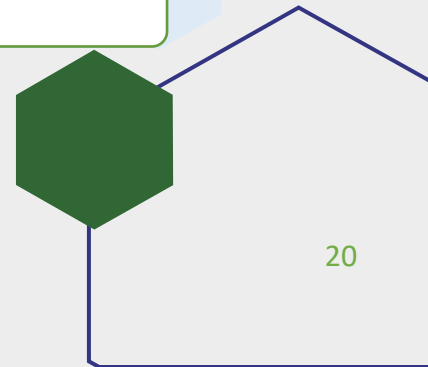
If determined eligible for SPA, submit pre-proposal form.



Pre-proposal evaluation and recommendation by committees.



Invitation for full application.



Tips for identifying potential mitigation projects

- Develop a natural resource inventory.
- Develop a list of potential compensatory mitigation opportunities.
- Prioritize permanent protection of high value, difficult to replace resources and connectivity corridors.
- Collaborate with partners on common conservation interests and priorities.
- Consider mitigation opportunities on existing public and/or conserved lands.
- Be proactive & promote projects that satisfy mitigation requirements and address local priorities.



THANK YOU!

[ARM Fund Program Website](http://des.arm@des.nh.gov)

des.arm@des.nh.gov

Emily Nichols

ARM Fund Program Manager

Emily.P.Nichols@des.nh.gov

Seta Detzel

ARM Project Manager

Seta.A.Detzel@des.nh.gov

Janelle Grehan

ARM Program Specialist

Janelle.Grehan@des.nh.gov

Morgan Bryant

ARM Monitoring Specialist

Morgan.N.Bryant@des.nh.gov

