



**Niagara River Greenway Commission  
Greenway Related Projects and Programs**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**PROJECT CONSULTATION and PROJECT REVIEW**

**Effective October 2021**

## Table of Contents

1. General Information on Consultation and Review Procedures .....	Pages 3 - 4
a. Introduction	
b. Review Process	
c. Niagara River Greenway Principles, Goals and Criteria	
2. General Instructions .....	Pages 5 - 6
a. Instructions for Project Review Form	
3. Frequently Asked Questions .....	Page 7
4. Consultation and Project Review Form .....	Pages 8 - 10

## **Niagara River Greenway Vision**

*The Niagara River Greenway aspires to be a world-class corridor of places, parks and landscapes that celebrates and interprets our unique natural, cultural, recreational, scenic and heritage resources and provides access to and connections between these important resources while giving rise to economic opportunities for the region.*

### **Introduction**

Approval of the Niagara River Greenway Plan on May 17, 2007 marked the beginning of a new era for the Niagara River and surrounding communities. The plan defines the vision that will guide the future of this internationally renowned water resource and the principles, goals and criteria that will serve to define this vision. The Niagara River Greenway Commission is responsible for the implementation of this plan and will work toward its achievement by carrying out its duties and responsibilities as defined in Chapter 460 of the Laws of New York 2004. The guiding blueprint is the Niagara River Greenway Plan which developed as a grassroots effort in cooperation with state agencies, municipal governments, stakeholder groups and the general public. The Niagara River Greenway Plan can be viewed at [www.niagararivergreenway.com](http://www.niagararivergreenway.com)

Proposals brought before the Niagara River Greenway Commission include projects for funding under the various settlement agreements through the four standing committees that were established during the relicensing of the New York Power Authority Project. In addition, other projects not seeking Relicensing Greenway funds may be brought before the Commission when the sponsor is seeking review and endorsement in conjunction with their application for various grants or approvals other than Greenway funds.

### **Review Process**

The Niagara River Greenway Commission is responsible for stewardship of the Niagara River Greenway Plan that will define the future of the Niagara River corridor. In this regard, the Commission will review projects in terms of its operative principles, goals and criteria. Project proponents are expected to provide sufficient documentation so that members of the Commission will be able to determine if a specific project is consistent with the Niagara River Greenway Plan.

It is not the intent of the Commission to duplicate the technical review procedures that may be employed by other government agencies with regulatory or advisory authority over projects within the Niagara River Greenway. However, the Commission reserves the right to assess any project element and specification that will have an impact on the Niagara River Greenway vision.

### **Niagara River Greenway Principles, Goals and Criteria**

The Niagara River Greenway vision, mission with its corresponding principles, goals and criteria are the standard upon which all projects brought before the Niagara River Greenway Commission are judged. The principles, goals and criteria along with the corresponding page numbers from the approved Niagara River Greenway Plan is as follows:

#### **Principles** (pages 19 – 22 of the Niagara River Greenway Plan)

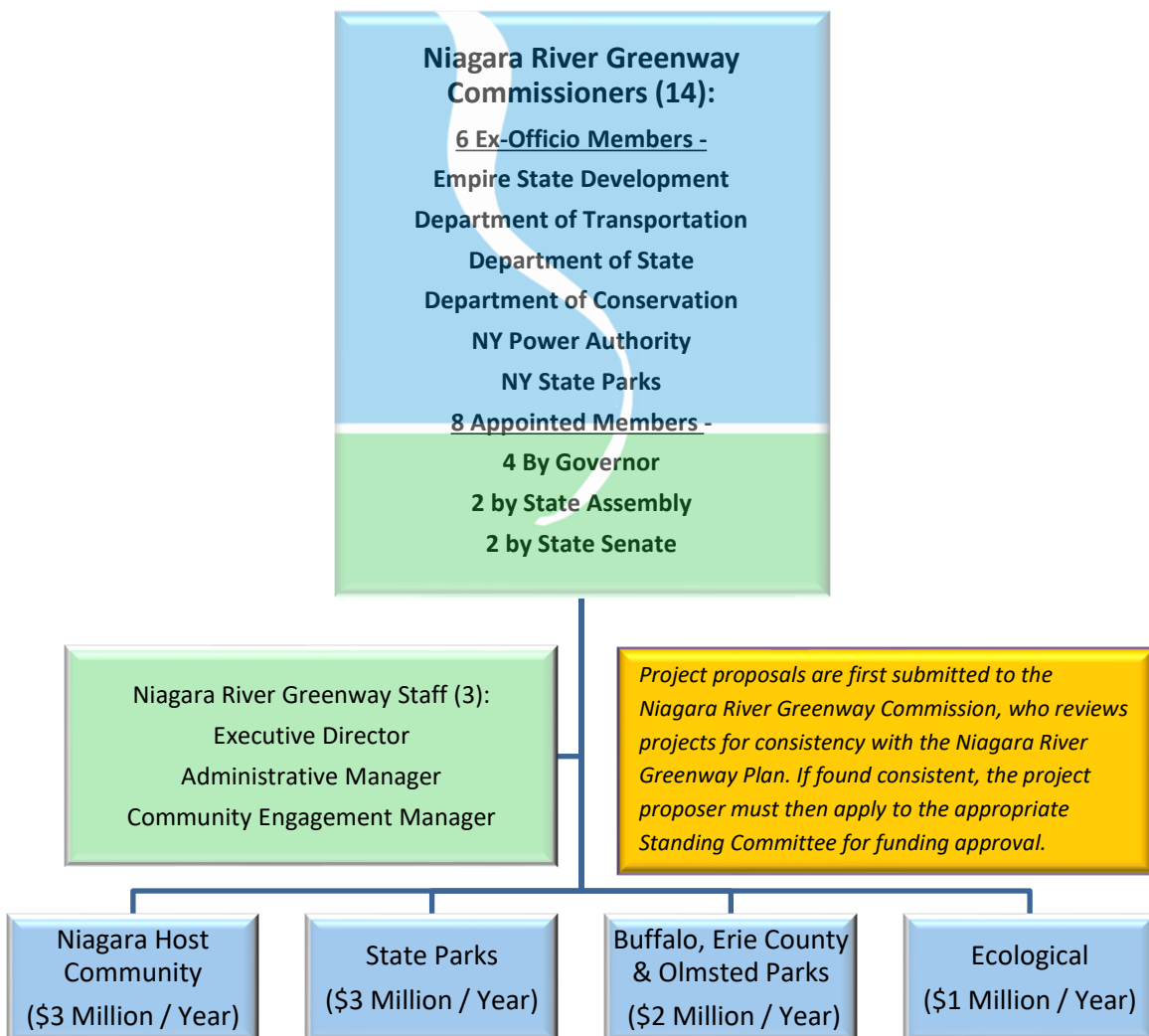
Excellence	Restoration
Sustainability	Authenticity
Accessibility	Celebration
Ecological Integrity	Partnerships
Public Well-Being	Community Based
Connectivity	

**Goals** (pages 23 – 25 of the Niagara River Greenway Plan)

Improve Access	Promote Long Term Sustainability
Make Connections	Extend the Legacy of Fredrick Law Olmsted
Protect and Restore Environmental Systems	Celebrate History and Heritage
Spark Revitalization and Renewal	

**Criteria** (pages 27 – 35 of the Niagara River Greenway Plan)

Consistency with Greenway Principles	Economic Viability
Priority Status	Availability of Local Sponsor or Partner
Focus Area	Ability to Match or Leverage Funds
Environmental Soundness	Consideration of Other Planning Efforts
Implementable	Clear Benefits



## General Instructions

**PROJECT REVIEW CONTENT AND FORMAT:** Project information shall include all necessary information and project documentation and shall follow the order set forth above for Principles, Goals and Criteria that encompass the Niagara River Greenway Vision. Request for consultation or review will not be considered until all necessary materials have been provided.

**PROJECT SPONSORS WHO ARE NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATIONS:** These sponsors must provide proof of their tax exempt status pursuant to the United States Internal Revenue Code.

**PROJECT NAME:** The project name shall be clear and concise.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Provide the specific address for the proposed project. If the project is a State Landmark site or National Landmark site, use the full, official name of the property as it is listed in the appropriate State or National Register. The unofficial or popular name may be shown in parentheses after the official name. List the local historic designation, if applicable.

**MINOR CIVIL DIVISION:** A minor civil division is the incorporated boundary of a village, city or town in which a project is taking place. Some projects may involve more than one political boundary and if so, information shall be provided for each one.

**OWNERSHIP INFORMATION:** If the applicant is not the owner of the property on which the project will be located a letter or resolutions of support must be provided from the responsible property owner.

**AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:** This is the designated person who will receive official notifications from the Niagara River Greenway Commission about the project.

**POINT OF CONTACT:** The person who will act on behalf of the project sponsor, provide additional project information and participate in the consultation process. In some instances the Point of Contact may also be the Authorized Official. If that is the case a notation should be made on the project review form.

**BUDGET SUMMARY:** Provide all of the information that is required on the project review form and be sure to include the **required operations and maintenance plan**.

**PROJECT NARRATIVE:** A succinct project narrative shall be prepared following the order shown in the project review form. It shall be limited to a brief paragraph describing the project and its purpose, how it will be accomplished and why it is important.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE:** The anticipated project schedule must be defined. Include the project planning steps, project start date, duration of construction and completion date. In addition, a list of the required regulatory permits needed for the project must be provided.

**MAPS AND PHOTOGRAPHS:** **Submit an original, 1:24,000 scale USGS or DOT planimetric map** with the proposed project site identified. To obtain maps, project sponsors may visit <https://gis.ny.gov/>. Photographic prints showing the planned project area and existing site conditions shall be provided. If appropriate, include aerial photographs.

**REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:** The project review form shall include conceptual plans and drawings that depict the existing site conditions and the same site with the proposed project. Highlighted sections of local planning documents and/or **a copy of a resolution adopting or reaffirming the local plan within the last five years** shall be

included with the application. If the proposed project is not specifically identified in a formally adopted local land use plan an approval or endorsement must accompany the profile. The final attachment will be a brief description of the applicability of the State Environmental Review Act to the proposed project.

**PUBLIC PRESENTATION:** Sponsors may be asked to present their project profile in a public forum at a meeting of the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Comments received on specific project proposals from the public will be fully considered during the deliberations of the Niagara River Greenway Commission.

**DOCUMENT SUBMISSION:** One hard copy of completed document shall be submitted to **Niagara River Greenway Commission, PO Box 1132, Niagara Falls NY 14303**. In addition, one PDF file (no larger than 7 MB) of the completed document shall be emailed to [lisa.vitello@parks.ny.gov](mailto:lisa.vitello@parks.ny.gov). Upon receipt the Executive Director shall review the documents to determine that they are complete, and if necessary, the sponsor will be promptly informed of items missing in order to complete the submission.

**In addition, it is the applicant's responsibility to submit the proposal to the relevant standing committee following consistency review from the Commission. Each associated Standing Committee has a separate proposal application. Review Greenway Standing Committee websites for additional information.**

Niagara Host Community: <http://www.niagarapowercoalition.com/hcsc/index.php>

State Parks: same application as Greenway Commission - <http://www.niagararivergreenway.com>

Buffalo and Erie County Greenway Standing Committee:  
<http://niagara.nypa.gov/RelicensingGreenwayFunds/BuffaloErieGreenway/BEdefault.htm>

Greenway Ecological Standing Committee:  
<http://niagara.nypa.gov/RelicensingGreenwayFunds/EcologicalGreenway/EcolDefault.htm>

## Frequently Asked Questions

### ***WHO CAN SUBMIT PROJECTS OR PROPOSALS FOR REVIEW?***

Municipalities, municipal entities, state agencies, public benefit corporations, public authorities, not-for-profit corporations, non-governmental organizations and members of the public with an interest in projects that will advance the vision of the Niagara River Greenway.

### ***WHY SHOULD MY PROJECT OR PROPOSAL BE REVIEWED?***

Project sponsors seeking funding from any of the New York Power Authority Relicensing Settlement Agreements must submit a project review form and show evidence of consultation with the Niagara River Greenway Commission. Others not seeking these funds who are considering filing a grant application for project funding may accrue additional competitive benefits by receiving a finding of consistency and endorsement from the Niagara River Greenway Commission.

### ***WHAT HAPPENS IF THE DOCUMENTATION IS FOUND TO BE INCOMPLETE?***

Failure to do so will delay the process until all necessary materials have been provided.

### ***WHAT ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS?***

The review and consultation procedures employed by the Niagara River Greenway Commission only consider how the project will advance the vision of the Niagara River Greenway. These procedures are not a substitute for the requirements of State Environmental Quality Review Act. Furthermore, applicants are responsible for coordinating with those State agencies that have regulatory or advisory authority over the proposed project. A finding of consistency or endorsement from the Niagara River Greenway Commission in and of itself does not give any project sponsor the right to proceed absent compliance with the requirements of Federal, State and Local law.

### ***IS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE?***

Yes, Commission staff, subject to the availability of time and resources, will provide guidance and assistance to prospective applicants. All such assistance will be limited to normal business hours.

### ***WHEN CAN I SUBMIT MY REQUEST FOR PROJECT OR PROGRAM REVIEW?***

A Review or Consultation request may be submitted at any time.

### ***HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE FOR MY PROJECT OR PROGRAM TO BE REVIEWED?***

To a large extent that will depend on the complexity of the proposal and funding cycles. Generally, Project Sponsors will be notified within fifteen working days of submittal that their documentation is complete. The Commission will review completed submittals as expeditiously as possible subject to the availability of time and resources.

## **Niagara River Greenway Commission Consultation and Review Form**

Date of Submittal:

Project Registration Number (*office use only*):

Type of Review Required (please check one):

- Mandatory Consultation for proposals seeking Greenway Funding  
 Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement for proposals not seeking Greenway Funding

**PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION**

Name:	<u>Mark Laurrie</u>
Mailing Address:	630 66 <sup>th</sup> Street, Niagara Falls
State:	New York
Zip Code:	14304
Federal ID#:	
Charities Registration #:	

**PROJECT TYPE** (Please check only ONE)

- Trail Development / Improvement                       Interpretation / Cultural Monuments  
 Ecosystem / Riparian Habitat Restoration                       Stewardship  
 Niagara River Greenway Placemaking / Public Access / Wayfinding

**FUNDING COMMITTEE**

- Host Community Standing Committee                       Ecological Standing Committee  
 Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee                       State Parks Standing Committee  
 Unsure at this time / N/A

**TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED**     

**ADDITIONAL FUNDING FROM OTHER SOURCES**

Source	Amount
<u>Niagara Falls City School District</u>	<u>TBA</u>



**PROJECT INFORMATION**

Project Name:	<u>Environmental Ambassador Summit</u>
Location (include GPS coordinates if possible):	NYPA
Project Site Address:	5777 Lewiston Road, Lewiston
State:	NY
Zip Code:	14092
Minor Civil Division(s):	
County:	Niagara
Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other):	

**AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL**

Name:	<u>Mark Laurrie</u>
Title:	Superintendent Niagara Falls School District
Business Address:	630 66 <sup>th</sup> Street, Niagara Falls
State:	NY
Zip Code:	14304
Work Number:	716-286-4190
Cell Number:	716-870-4198
E-Mail Address:	<a href="mailto:MLaurrie@cfnfschools.net">MLaurrie@cfnfschools.net</a>

**PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT**

Name:	<u>Same as above</u>
Title:	
Organization / Firm:	
Business Address:	
State:	
Zip Code:	
Work Number:	
Cell Number:	
E-Mail Address:	

## **PROJECT NARRATIVE**

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

### **Purpose & Importance**

The Niagara Falls school district is requesting Niagara River Greenway funding to support youth stewardship and the Environmental Ambassador Summit (EAS) in Niagara County schools. For the past two years, the EAS was offered to high schools within Erie County, and specifically the greater Tonawanda area as part of the Tonawanda Community Environmental Benefit fund. The program was a great success and should be offered to students in Niagara County as well. The purpose of the EAS is threefold;

1. To increase students' awareness and interest in our local freshwater ecology, while impressing on them the importance of the Niagara River at an ecological, cultural and historical level.
2. Implement appropriate scaled, student led projects that have a positive impact on our environment.
3. To prepare students for their future, by providing opportunities to practice project management skills and offering information on what a career path in the environmental sciences and/or sustainability might look like, hence preparing our future Greenway leaders of tomorrow.

In addition to these three main goals, the EAS helps foster a sense of appreciation and responsibility for our greenspace, so that this young generation will become good stewards of our land well into adulthood. Ultimately, these individuals can help grow the local volunteer base that many of the non-profit environmental organizations rely on to maintain their habitat restoration projects that Niagara River Greenway funds. The Greenway is always in need of volunteers to do litter cleanup to remove pollutants from our waterways, to remove invasive species that are crowding out our native pollinator plants and installation of native plants, trees and shrubs to increase biodiversity. With the ever-changing weather patterns, we have all been experiencing recently, now is the time to increase biodiversity, to help cool ground temperatures, and to help with flooding issues.

### **Project Description**

Four high schools from Niagara County (Niagara Falls, Niagara Wheatfield, Lew-Port and North Tonawanda) will enroll up to two teams each of 10 students to participate in the 2025 Environmental Ambassador Summit. Teams will work with their teacher advisor, with support from Niagara River Greenway staff, to come up with an outdoor project that will benefit the environment within the Greenway area. Students will research current environmental issues that are important to them and that are impacting areas close to their school or on school grounds (within the Greenway boundaries). They will then come up with a plan to help improve the issue and submit a mini-grant application to Niagara River Greenway one month prior to the EAS. Completing the application provides students the opportunity to create a budget and a timeline, two important elements to successful project management.

Three environmental professionals will judge all the applications based on a predesigned rubric and will give a score to each proposal that will be one of three scores combined to arrive at the top three winners of the EAS. Scoring of the proposals is done prior to the EAS. Students then prepare a slide presentation that they will orally present the day of the summit to the same three judges. This provides an opportunity for the judges to ask

questions about the teams' proposed project and offer some constructive advice. Students also prepare a poster for the summit that allows students to visually and more informally talk about their project with many other environmental professionals and students and teachers from other teams. These two elements of the EAS make up the two other scores that will determine who the top three winners are.

The day of the summit begins with a station rotation of 6 environmental organizations discussing what projects they are working on, the impact it is making and what their day-to-day job is like. Students learn a great deal about what a career in this field looks like. The small groups allows for easy open dialogue between students and professionals. After this, we all break for lunch and a keynote speaker addresses the entire group. After the speaker we start the individual team oral presentations, where teams are presenting in a small conference room with just the three judges, their teacher and an NRG staff member. At the same time the poster session is happening with exhibitor tables of businesses and universities. Universities are showcasing their environmental programs and businesses are talking about the sustainability practices they utilize at their jobs. It is a great way for students to learn about internship or other employment opportunities as well.

At the end of the summit, we announce the winners and present a plaque to the first-place winner. Each team is expected to implement their project by the end of the school year, however if the students are able to continue to work on it into the following Fall semester, we can extend the implementation period. Niagara River Greenway will support project implementation by helping secure any necessary permissions or permits to work on project site (if not on school property) and recommend material sources, such as native plant vendors.

Additionally, each school district can bring up to 10 interested middle school students as learners to EAS. Teacher advisors will also attend with each high school team and middle school learners group. This will inspire younger students to want to participate when they move on to high school.

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.*

For the past two years Niagara River Greenway has sponsored the Environmental Ambassador Summit funded through the Tonawanda Community Environmental Benefit Grant. Niagara County School Districts would like to provide Niagara County students with the same outstanding learning experience this summit would provide. We feel this summit would advance the Niagara River Greenway vision, goals, principles and criteria in the following manner.

Niagara County School Districts fall within the municipal boundaries of the Greenway. The Environmental Ambassador Summit would provide an opportunity for educational programming about the Niagara River Greenway. Students will connect with their home environment engaging in extensive research and study about the Niagara River Corridor.

Education about the region's cultural, natural and historic resources is one of the priorities of the Niagara River Greenway Plan. The Environmental Ambassador Summit will educate the students and the public and help them understand the value and variety of resources along the Greenway. Through this Summit students will create educational projects that will help them appreciate the value of ecological resources in their own backyard. They will have the opportunity to work with environmental organizations and agencies and possibly choose a career

path that will educate and benefit residents and visitors to the Greenway and improve the lives of future generations by protecting the Niagara River Corridor.

The proposed Environmental Ambassador Summit is an outstanding example of excellence in the ability to engage students in a process that includes adhering to guidelines, planning, research, preparation, oral presentations and working with their fellow students and environmental and corporate partners.

Ecological integrity and public well-being are additional principles of the Niagara River Greenway Plan. This summit will meet that criteria by providing our young residents with the opportunity to fully engage in research projects that preserve or restore natural habitats, remediate past environmental damage, encourage revitalization of ecosystems, including restoration, enhancement, improved water quality, healthy habitats, improved access, control of invasive species, reintroduction of indigenous species and bio-diversity. Projects are designed to promote stewardship for or awareness of the unique environmental features of the Niagara River Corridor and its surrounding regions.

This summit is a clear example of a celebration of diversity, cultural resources and activities that promote social interaction and shared experiences. Through their research and design projects these students will learn the importance of stewardship and dedication to the natural environment in which they live. This is a wonderful opportunity to move beyond the borders of the Greenway boundary and in to the minds of the next generation to encourage them to become life long stewards of the Niagara Greenway.

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

Planning / Professional Consultation – In Class supplemental instruction & consultation on project concept	\$1000
Construction / Project Implementation (Stipends)	\$2,000
Acquisition	\$0
Program management – Organization of Summit, teacher meetings, in class instruction & coaching, tool & supply procurement, assistance with project implementation, including any permit requirements	\$9,000
Summit Implementation – lunch (400), supplies (300), transportation (1,200), speaker (500) & teacher costs (600)	\$3,000
<b>TOTAL PROJECT COST/School</b>	<b>\$15,000</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 Niagara Falls school district will cover the costs of transportation of students and faculty to the Summit, which will be approximately \$1,200. The school will also cover the cost of substitute teachers during the Summit, which will be approximately \$600. The venue for the Summit will be supplied at no cost. There is a possibility that the speaker will also speak at no cost, depending on who it is.

Each school's project will be maintained by the advising teacher and future students.

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.*

There are multiple School Districts involved in this request. The superintendents from Niagara Falls, Lewiston, Niagara Wheatfield and North Tonawanda are all in support of this summit. Businesses, environmental organizations and university partners including, Linde, NOCO, DuPont, Casella, Canisus, Niagara University, Daemen, University of Buffalo, Suny ESF, Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper, NYS Parks, US Fish and Wildlife Services, DEC, Reinstein Woods, NY Sea Grant, Western New York Land Conservancy and NYPA. Teachers from each district will learn about resources open to them through these organizations, agencies and businesses. The summit will bring stakeholder groups, consultants and volunteers together from around the region.

Businesses will be there to educate students on environmentally sound practices and possible career paths. Environmental groups will share with students their mission, goals and work.

NYPA will host the summit providing participants with history and scientific knowledge of our region. All of these partners will connect students to the environment and those who serve it.

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 (SEQRA). 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.*

The main goal of this project is to educate youth about the ecosystems surrounding the Niagara River corridor and how students can help support and improve the quality of the greenspace and waterways. Students will also be able to implement small demonstration type projects that will further their understanding, and interest, while also having positive impacts on the environment. Projects will take place on their school grounds or on a public greenspace within the Niagara River Greenway. Greenway will assist all schools with any permission and permits needed to complete their projects.

6. *Please attach the proposed project timeline, identify any relevant milestones, and provide an estimated date for project completion/opening. If funded, it is expected that the project sponsor or point of contact will notify the Commission of the project opening date as it nears completion. (Note: This addition to the application was made September 2018.)*

Schools will begin to work with Greenway Staff in the Fall of 2024, where they will meet with teachers to discuss what types of projects they think the students would like to work on and where the site might be. NRG Staff will come into the classroom to present an introduction to the Niagara River Greenway, the Great Lakes water ecology, the importance of biodiversity and discuss the Environmental Ambassador Summit. This will all be accomplished by Fall of 2024.

Greenway staff will continue to work with teachers and students to help them flesh out their grant proposal and answer any questions about the summit.

Summit application (see attachment) will be due to during the first week couple weeks of January 2025.

The Environmental Ambassador Summit will be held within the first couple weeks of February 2025.

Teachers and students, with the help of Greenway staff, will work on implementing their projects in the Spring of 2025, with a completing by the end of the school year.

If there is any maintenance needed for completed projects, the teacher will work with future students to help maintain the project site. Teachers can build off of existing projects year to year, to make it an ongoing larger project.