

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

Presented for

PROJECT CONSULTATION and PROJECT REVIEW

By



November 17, 2020

Project Registration Number (*office use only*) _____

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

Type of Review Required:

Mandatory Consultation

Voluntary Review and/or Endorsement

PROJECT SPONSOR INFORMATION

Name: BRRAlliance, Inc

Mailing Address: 43 Hamilton Street, Buffalo

State: NY Zip Code: 14207

Federal ID# 45-2481780 Charities Registration # 43-49-39

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

Funding Committee Host Community Standing Committee

Request:

Buffalo and Erie County Standing Committee

Ecological Standing Committee

State Parks Standing Committee

Unsure at this time

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name: The Habitat Project - Phase 2 & Phase 3
Location: County wide in Erie and Niagara Counties
Site Address: Various addresses
State: NY Zip Code: multiple
Minor Civil Division(s): multiple
County: Erie and Niagara
Project Proponent Property Interest (own, lease, easement or other): privately and municipality owned

AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL

Name: Mary Ann Kedron, MBA, PhD Title: President, Board of Directors
Business Address: 43 Hamilton Street, Buffalo
State: NY Zip Code: 14207
Telephone Number: _____ Cell Number: 716-440-9016
Fax Number: N/A
E-Mail Address: makedron@icloud.com

PROJECT POINT OF CONTACT

Name: Anne K.C. McCooey Title: Project Manager
Organization/Firm: BRRAlliance, Inc.
Business Address: 43 Hamilton Street, Buffalo
State: NY Zip Code: 14207
Telephone Number: _____ Cell Number: 716-202-9070
Fax Number: N/A
E-Mail Address: amccooey@brralliance.org



The Habitat Project: Phase 2 – Erie County & Phase 3 – Niagara County Project Narrative

Project Overview

The Habitat Project started in Buffalo in May 2019 when the BRRAlliance launched a city-wide effort to certify Buffalo as a National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat™. The National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat™ program partners with cities, towns, counties, neighborhoods, and communities of all kinds to become healthier, greener, and more wildlife-friendly. Community Wildlife Habitats garden and landscape with wildlife in mind, promote the use of native trees and plants, work to reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and chemicals, and integrate wildlife-friendly practices into sustainability plans and park master plans. Through this program communities can enhance and restore islands and corridors of wildlife habitat in urban and suburban areas nationwide, while at the same time connecting to existing work around climate resiliency, community resiliency, urban forestry, water conservation, beautification, and more.

Communities earn community-wide certification by certifying individual properties (homes, parks, schools, businesses, and others) in their community as Certified Wildlife Habitats and by doing education and outreach in their community. Education and outreach points are earned by engaging community members in habitat restoration projects, providing resources like native plant lists, and communicating through websites and social media.

When the BRRAlliance first started the Habitat Project in Buffalo the NWF indicated a city the size of Buffalo would take a minimum of three to four years to complete the certification process. In November 2020, the City of Buffalo becomes the largest certified community in New York State and the 15th largest in the country, and the BRRAlliance did it in 18 months!

Since the launch in May 2019, the BRRAlliance has educated individuals, schools and community groups and strategically partnered with other ecological and environmentally focused organizations within the city to spread the message of planting with the purpose of encouraging a healthier eco-system that provides food, water, shelter, a place to raise young and sustainable practices to create habitats for wildlife in this urban community.

Shortly after the Buffalo project got underway the BRRAlliance was approached by others outside the City of Buffalo to manage habitat certification projects county wide in both Erie and Niagara County, and has registered both municipalities and now prepares to begin this expansive project.

The BRRAlliance will achieve certification for these two counties with a strategy similar to that of the Buffalo project but also considering the geographic and demographic differences in Erie and Niagara County.

The strategies for these projects will include:

- outreach and engagement of schools and community groups, such as Grassroots Gardens (a partner on the Buffalo project) to certify habitats in their green spaces;

- engage the municipalities in the counties to support certification of municipality owned and managed green spaces and parks;
- educate and assist individual property owners on how to plant with a purpose and certify their property as an NWF habitat;
- provide resources for those working to certify properties in these counties through in-person assistance as needed and on-line access to educational and networking information; and
- celebrate the achievement of community certification.

It is anticipated that Phase 2 – Erie County will launch early 2021 and Phase 3 – Niagara County will launch late 2021.

This project is important because it will:

- improve social and environmental justice by connecting diverse urban and suburban communities through the environment in a unique grassroots way;
- create more environmentally aware and responsive communities and individuals;
- create a more balanced and healthier regional environment;
- raise the status of the participating communities as environmentally responsible communities statewide and nationally;
- attract funding for future environmental projects by showing the region wide commitment to a healthy eco-system;
- enhance eco-tourism efforts by increasing wildlife unique to and thriving in our region; and
- help attract environmentally focused industries (i.e. recycling, remediation job training and job work, native plant agriculture) to locate to this region.

Niagara River Greenway Vision

Based on using the National Wildlife Federation model for creating successful certified habitat communities, which was highly successful in the certification of the City of Buffalo, it is apparent that these projects will support the **goals** of the Niagara River Greenway by:

- making connections within communities and within regions and among individuals
- protecting and restoring environmental systems by creating new habitats and acknowledging existing successful habitat areas
- sparking revitalization and renewal by encouraging citizens to analyze their surrounding and identify habitat areas and potential habitat areas
- promoting longer term sustainability by partnering with the NWF who will help monitor the continued certification of communities and stay connected to the communities and the individual property owners

These projects will uphold the Niagara River Greenway Plan **principles** of:

- Excellence by using National Wildlife Federation guidelines for habitat certification
- Sustainability by encouraging the use of native plants and perennials as appropriate to the environmental conditions of the habitat spaces
- Accessibility by encouraging habitat visits and using signage to identified certified habitat areas
- Ecological integrity through the use of native plants whenever possible, and by the nature of creating habitat space
- Public well-being by engaging citizens of the communities in gardening and planting with purpose which has shown to have physical benefits as well as emotional and mental well-being benefits and provides better air quality to communities
- Connectivity by bringing together distinctly different segments of the communities in a unified project that will target and connect young and old, homeowners and developers, local parks and recreation managers and government agencies and environmental organizations
- Restoration as it creates and builds certified habitat spaces in areas that have been abandoned or neglected or never considered to be wildlife habitable
- Authenticity as the projects look at what was in the community for wildlife to thrive and works to bring back some areas and create new ones that will support the wildlife native to the area
- Celebration as we complete these projects, acknowledge the work of all those that help certify properties and take pride in setting the bar high for other communities in New York State as all three completed phases of this project make up the top three in the state and numbers #4, #16 and #18 in the country
- Partnerships with schools, civic organizations, other environmental organizations, government agencies, community groups, garden clubs and groups, block clubs and individuals and the National Wildlife Federation
- Community based as this project is a grassroots model through the NWF

And that the Habitat Project in both Erie and Niagara County will incorporate the **criteria** for these projects to be supported by the Niagara River Greenway as noted in previously narrative, that include:

- Consistency with the Greenway principles
- Priority status
- Focus area
- Environmental soundness
- Implementable
- Economic viability
- Availability of local sponsors and partners
- Ability to leverage funding
- Consideration of other planning efforts
- Clear benefits

Budget

Phase 2 – Erie County

Planning - \$3,000

Kickoff event, stakeholder meetings, community leadership meetings

Education & Outreach - \$10,000

Travel, educational materials, meetings, website, signage, components to complete habitats as needed (water sources, native plants etc.)

Registration funds as needed - \$4,000

Administration

Staff – part time - \$17,000

Equipment and supplies - \$3,000

Maintenance of certifications over 5 years - \$3,000

Total – Phase 2 - \$40,000

Phase 3 – Niagara County

Planning - \$4,000

Kickoff event, stakeholder meetings, community leadership meetings

Education & Outreach - \$15,000

Travel, educational materials, meetings, website, signage, components to complete habitats as needed (water sources, native plants etc.)

Registration funds as needed - \$5,000

Administration

Staff – part time - \$19,000

Equipment and supplies - \$3,000

Maintenance of certifications over 5 years - \$4,000

Total – Phase 3 - \$50,000

It should be noted that anticipated costs for Niagara County are slightly higher than for Erie County because the certification of Buffalo has already laid the groundwork for certification for Erie County and therefore will shorten the timeline anticipated to finish the county as compared to Niagara County. Phase 3 – Niagara County will be starting from scratch.

TOTAL PROJECT COST - \$90,000

Costs for these have been broken down by phase, as some expenses will be unique to the community needs. Because there will be some overlap in the timelines for these projects, the BRRAlliance will be looking for both phases to be funded together for a total of \$90,000 which will provide the ability to share resources, materials and make bulk purchases if needed.

Currently, no sources of funding have been sought. The project will be under the oversight of the BRRAlliance Board of Directors and project management team and if funded will include a part time contract employee to manage the day to day process of outreach, education and project delivery. Long term maintenance will consist of working with the National Wildlife Federation to remind certified properties of certification renewals in order to keep the community certification in good standing and the BRRAlliance continuing to engage property owners to maintain their certified habitats.

Community and Government Support

With these projects both in the planning and design phases community support outreach has been limited, but we have had initial conversations with the Erie County Parks Department, suburban Garden Walk committees, and Niagara Falls conservation educators regarding involvement in these projects with positive outcomes. Part of the formal planning process will be to get support from the major municipalities and local community groups by outreach and meetings to explain the project and the significance to their communities.

Environmental Setting & Conditions

This project is not site specific in that it is regional and each site involved in certifying will be independently evaluated by property owners and determinations for needs of the each site will be assessed. The BRRAlliance is familiar with the SEQRA, and when, where and if appropriate will be within compliance for any sites that fall within the scope of the review act.

Timeline

Phase 2 – Erie County

Based on funding

Early 2021 – Kickoff event and press notifications

8-12 months – project work to complete outreach and education requirements of certification and work with the community property owners and managers to complete habitat certification requirements

Completion goal for Erie County certification if funded in early 2021 will be 12 months later.

Phase 3 – Niagara County

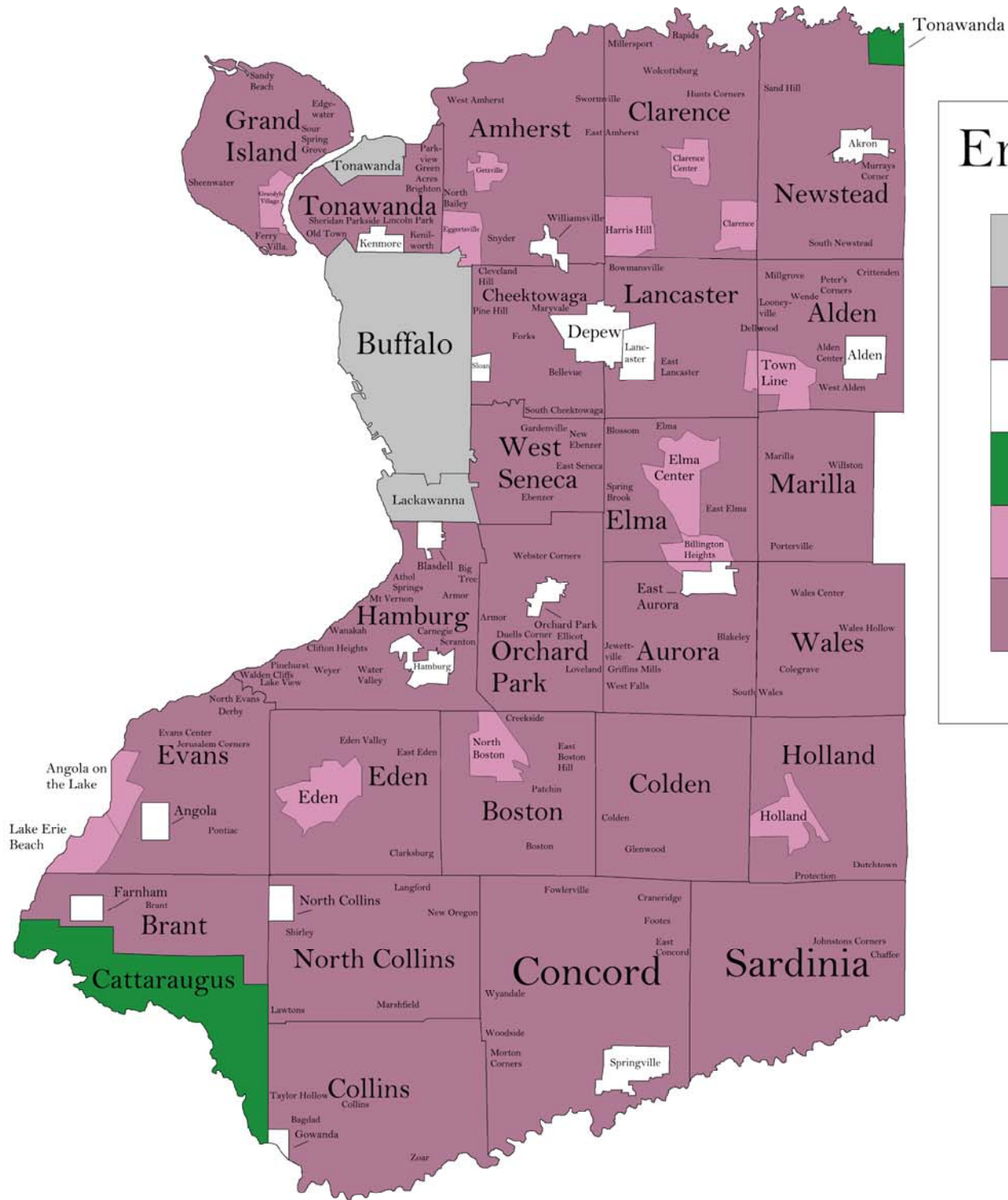
Based on funding

Later 2021 kickoff event and press notifications

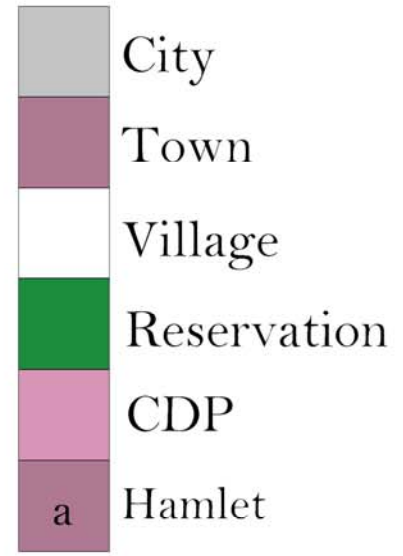
12-24 months – project work to complete outreach and education requirements of certification and work with the community property owners and managers to complete habitat certification requirements

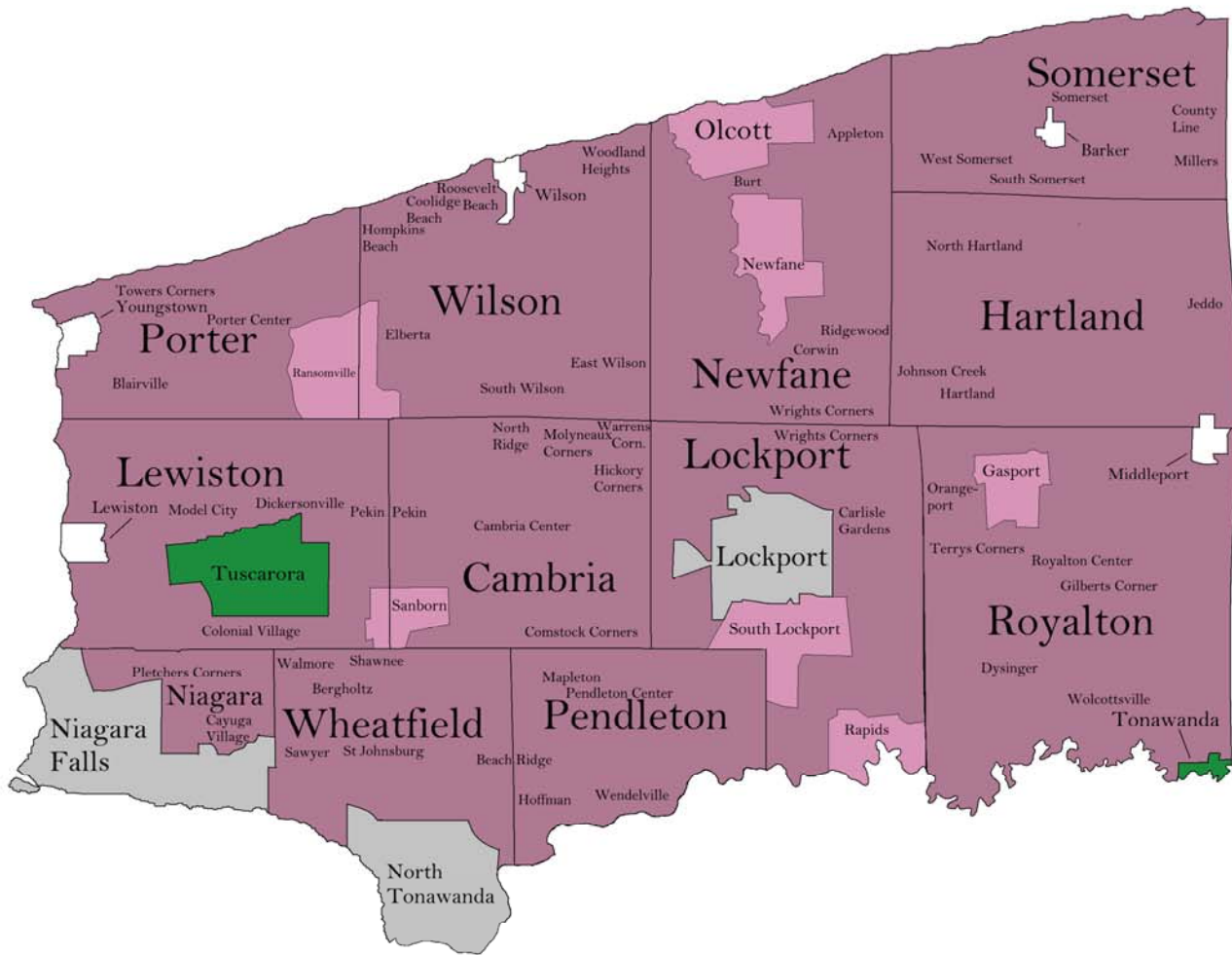
Completion goal for Niagara County certification, if funded in early 2021 will be 18-24 months later.

If funded, the Commission will be notified of all milestones, and completion dates prior to happening and will be acknowledged on signage, in press releases and other materials as appropriate.



Erie County, NY





Niagara County, NY

	City
	Town
	Village
	Reservation
	CDP
	Hamlet/Location

**Currently Certified NWF Community Wildlife Habitats
With populations above 200,000**

Community Name	State	Population Size
Houston	Texas	2200000
Broward County	Florida	1723000
Oakland County	Michigan	1232000
Erie County	NY	918702
Charlotte	North Carolina	867050
Pierce County	Washington	843954
Austin	Texas	735000
Seattle	Washington	724725
Baltimore	Maryland	621000
Lancaster County	Pennsylvania	536624
Sonoma County	California	466000
Washentaw County	Michigan	344791
Collier County	Florida	322000
City of Orlando	Florida	277000
Greater Mason District	Virginia	267776
Buffalo	NY	256902
Chula Vista	California	223000
Niagara County	NY	209281

This shows where Buffalo, Erie County and Niagara County will rank nationally when certified.

Data provided by the National Wildlife Federation

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
P. O. BOX 2508
CINCINNATI, OH 45201

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Date: **SEP 23 2012**

BRRALLIANCE INC
2475 NIAGARA ST
BUFFALO, NY 14207

Employer Identification Number:
45-2481780
DLN:
17053210307001
Contact Person:
MARK BRECKNER ID# 95217
Contact Telephone Number:
(877) 829-5500
Accounting Period Ending:
December 31
Public Charity Status:
170(b)(1)(A)(vi)
Form 990 Required:
Yes
Effective Date of Exemption:
June 6, 2011
Contribution Deductibility:
Yes
Addendum Applies:
No

Dear Applicant:

We are pleased to inform you that upon review of your application for tax exempt status we have determined that you are exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions to you are deductible under section 170 of the Code. You are also qualified to receive tax deductible bequests, devises, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the Code. Because this letter could help resolve any questions regarding your exempt status, you should keep it in your permanent records.

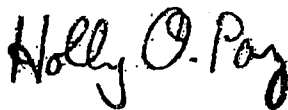
Organizations exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Code are further classified as either public charities or private foundations. We determined that you are a public charity under the Code section(s) listed in the heading of this letter.

Please see enclosed Publication 4221-PC, Compliance Guide for 501(c)(3) Public Charities, for some helpful information about your responsibilities as an exempt organization.

Letter 947 (DO/CG)

BRRALLIANCE INC

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly O. Paz". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped "H" and "P".

Holly O. Paz
Director, Exempt Organizations
Rulings and Agreements

Enclosure: Publication 4221-PC