§319-led land conservation initiatives

Protection Learning Exchange
Session 10
July 14, 2022

Steve Epting &
Sequoya Bua-Iam (ORISE)
EPA HQ, NSMB

Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program

and

Advancing Watershed Protection Through Land Conservation: A Guide for Land Trusts

Land Conservation in the §319 Program

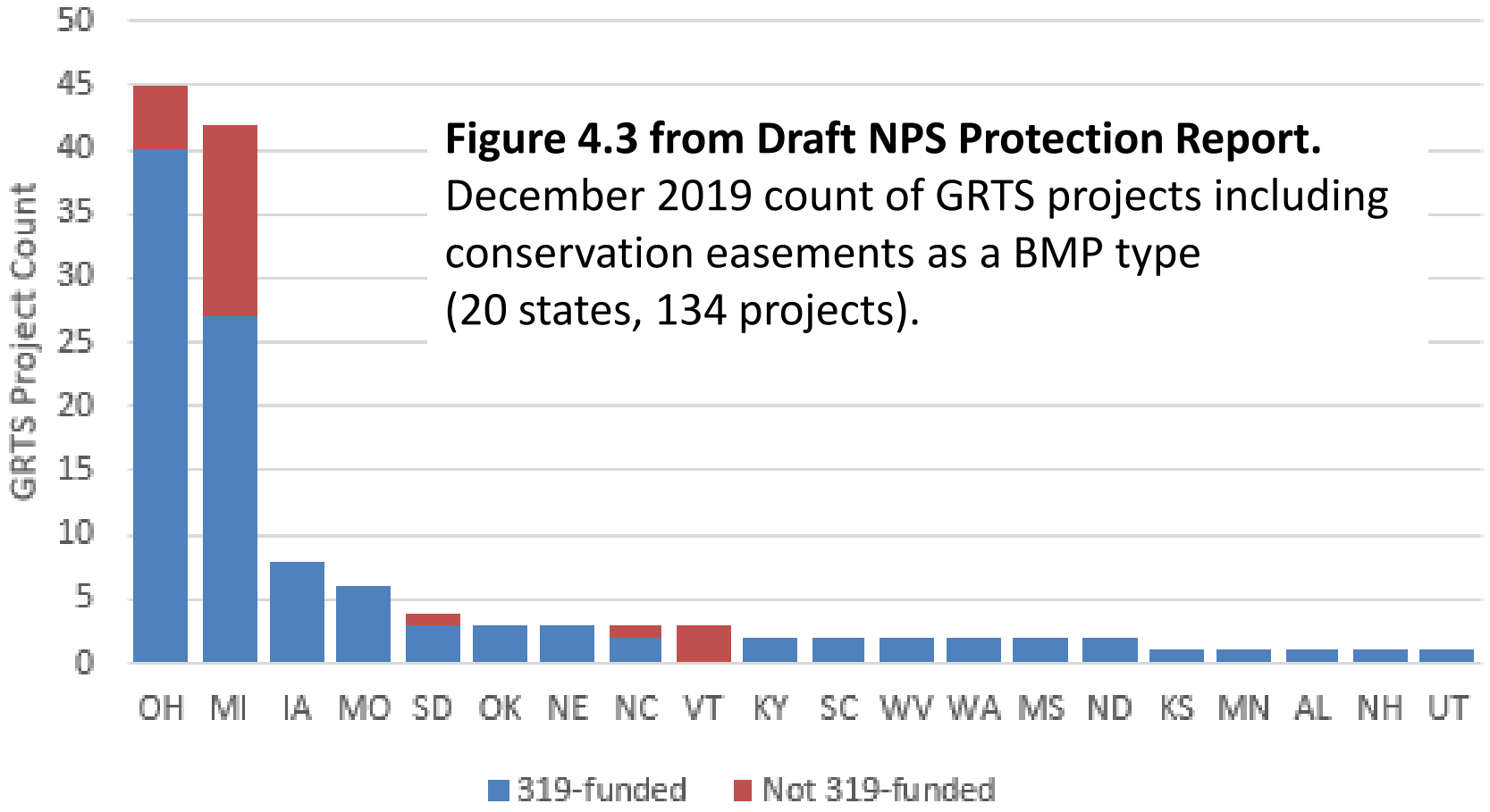


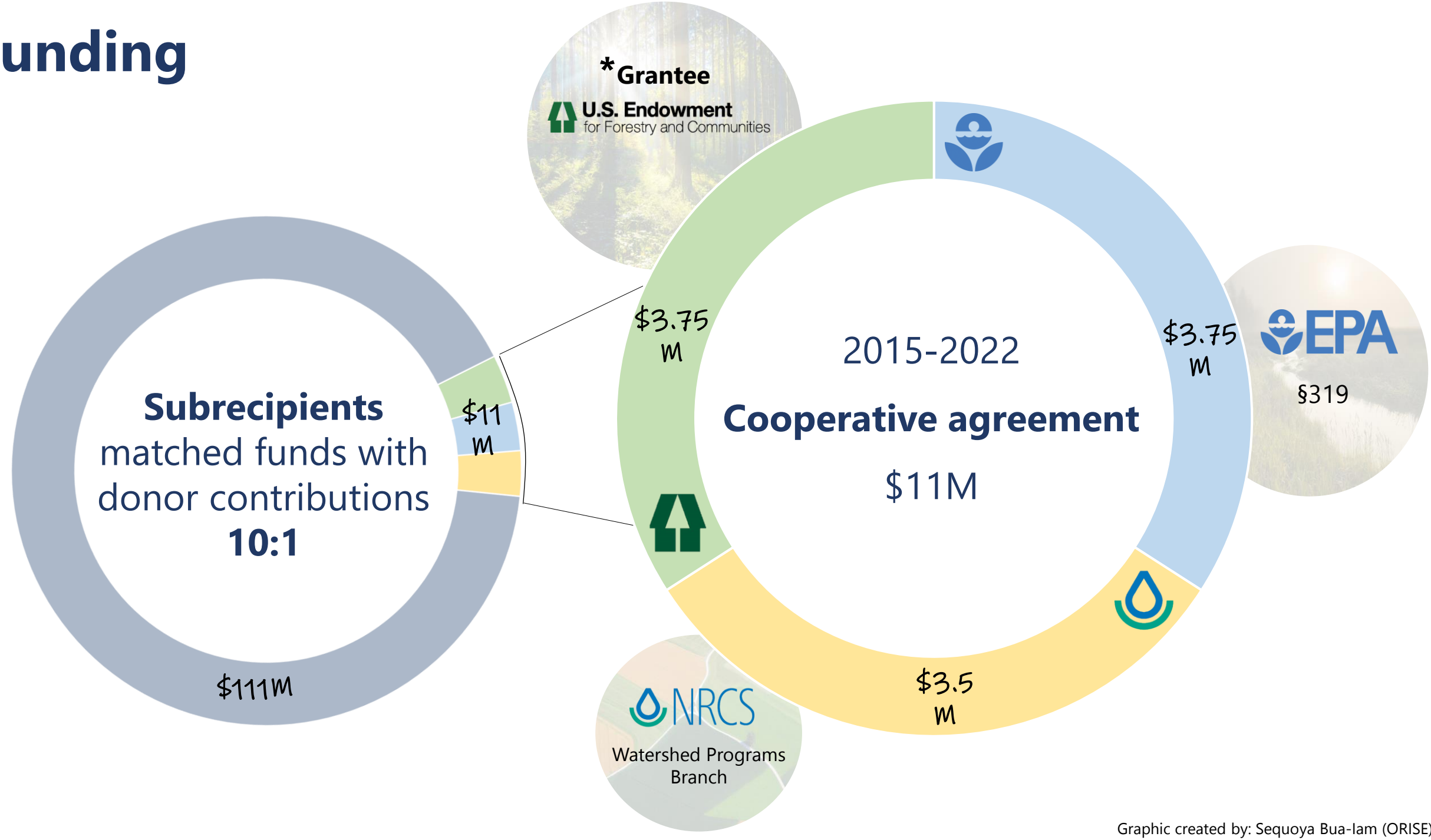
Figure 4.3 from Draft NPS Protection Report.
December 2019 count of GRTS projects including conservation easements as a BMP type
(20 states, 134 projects).

While §319(h) $ CAN'T be used for land purchase, it CAN be used for easements.

Healthy Watersheds Consortium (HWC) Grant Program

- EPA issued RFP in December 2014
- Program Objective: *"Accelerate and expand the strategic protection of healthy freshwater ecosystems and their watersheds across the country…by supporting an array of projects that assess, identify, communicate the value, and demonstrate protection of these watersheds."*
  - Build a consortium of funders (25% match requirement)
  - Develop a community of learning (2 nat'l meetings w/subawardees)
  - Communicate successes of HWC projects
  - Report on HWC project environmental results

Funding

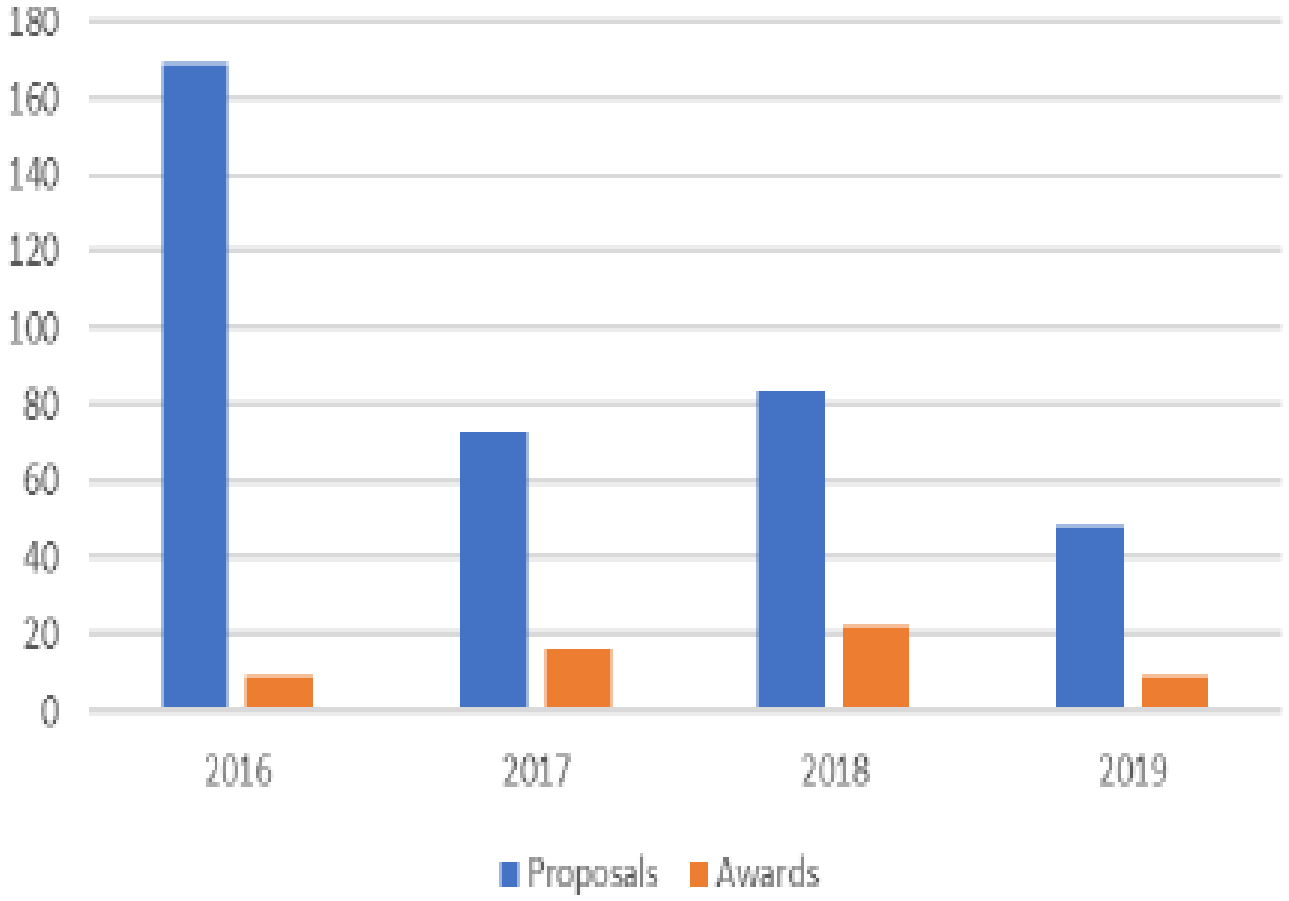


Graphic created by: Sequoya Bua-lam (ORISE)

HWC Grant Application Process

- Each cycle, US Endowment held 2 info session webinars
  - Significant 1:1 engagement w/prospective applicants to answer Qs, etc.
- **Applications:** 8-pg form, 3-5 letters of support, ≤2 maps (optional)
  - Current state of ecosystem health and watershed function?
  - Threats/timely opportunity for watershed protection?
  - Long-term vision (25 years) for watershed?
  - Links to an existing watershed plan/assessment?
  - Will project increase/maintain resiliency to climate change?
  - Does your organization have experience w/similar projects?
- **Identify 'limiting factors' in watershed protection work**

Grants



* EPA provided input to the US Endowment during application reviews.

Grant Cycles: 4

Proposals received*: 367

Proposals funded: 56

Funds requested: $80M

Funds awarded: $11M

Average grant length: 2-3 years

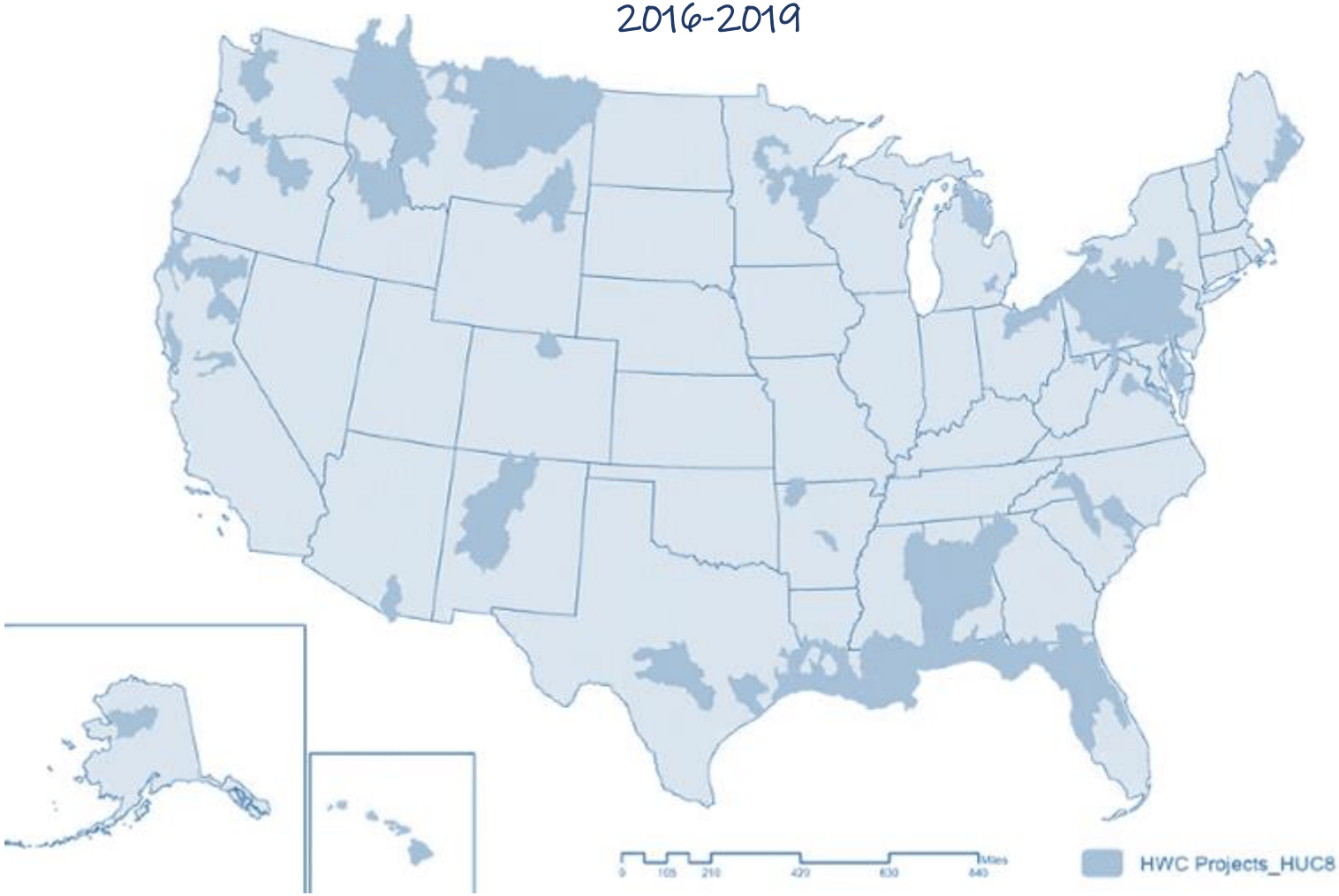
Award range: $31K-$350K

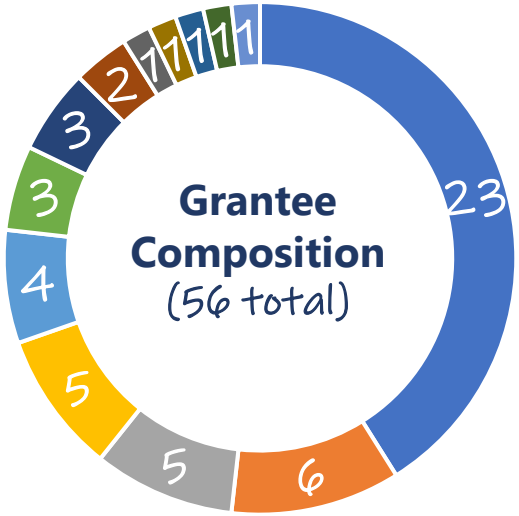
Average award amount: $177,756

Table created by: Jared Hardner (Hardner & Gullison Associates, LLC)

Grantees

Projects Funded
2016-2019





- **Land trusts**
- Large non-profits
- Watershed groups
- Networks
- State government agencies
- Small non-profits
- Water utilities
- Conservation Districts
- Local governments
- Tribes
- NEPs
- Private
- Conservation Corps

Project Types

1 **Watershed Action Projects**

2 **Building Watershed Protection Capacity**

3 **Advancing the State of Practice**

Map created by: Jeff Lerner (EPA); Other graphics created by: Sequoya Bua-Iam (ORISE)

Results:

~ **1.1M** acres

&

~ **5.2K** stream miles

protected

Principally in the form of easements + enhanced regulatory protections

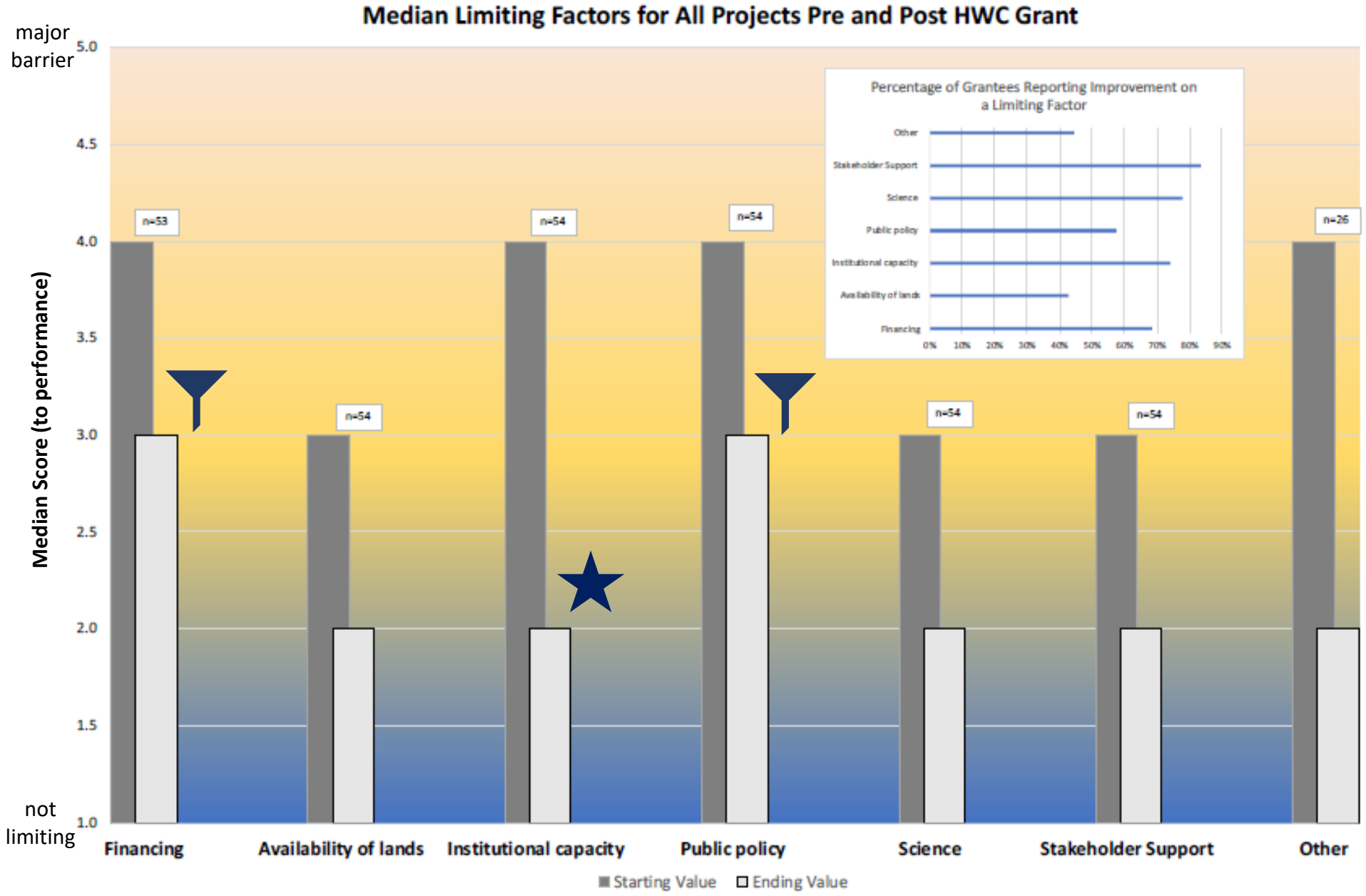


Table created by: Jared Hardner (Hardner & Gullison Associates, LLC)


ADVANCING WATERSHED PROTECTION THROUGH LAND CONSERVATION
A Guide for Land Trusts
July 2022
EPA
34 pages

Watershed Protection 101

Key Components of a Watershed

Watershed Approach

Clean Water Act Overview

Funding Matrix

Watershed Protection Strategies

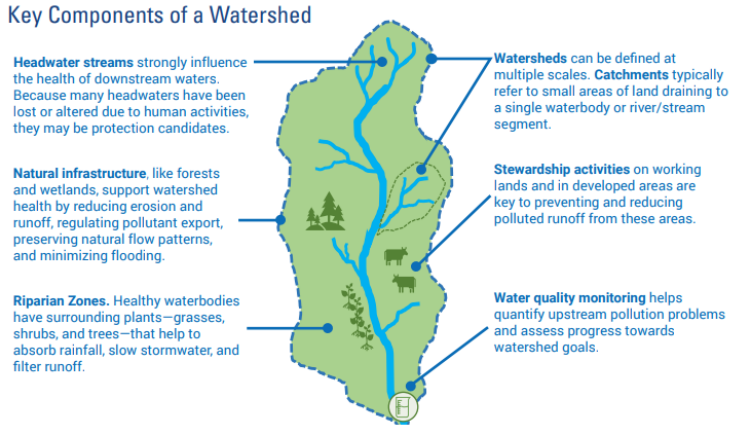
Building Partnerships

Conserving Land

Stewarding Land

Community Outreach

Land trust features



EPA Funding to Support Watershed Protection Work Table Continued

Funding Program	Type	Land Trusts Directly Fundable?	ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES	Award Amount Range	Match Requirement	Funding Cycle (e.g. annual)
Environmental Justice Small Grants Program	Grant	Yes	● ● ● ● ●	Up to $75,000	None	Annual
Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Grant Program	Grant	Yes	● ● ● ● ●	$20,000 - $50,000		
Great Lakes Restoration Initiative[9]	Grant; Cooperative Agreement	Yes	● ● ● ● ●	Up to $600,000		
Indian Environmental Assistance Program (GAP Funds)	Grant; Cooperative Agreement; Performance Partnership Grant	No	● ● ● ● ●	Varies		
National Estuary Program Coastal Watersheds Grants	Subaward Grants	Yes	● ● ● ● ●	$75,000 - $250,000 (approximate)		
Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA)	Loan	No	● ● ● ● ●	Min: $9.8M/ $2.5M (small communities); No upper limit		
Water Pollution Control Grants (Clean Water Act §106)	Grant	No	● ● ● ● ●	-	Maintain[10]	Annual
Wetland Program Development Grants	Grant; Cooperative Agreement	Yes	● ● ● ● ●			

EPA Resource Spotlight: How's My Waterway

EPA's How's My Waterway tool provides the public with an easily accessible and understandable picture of water quality at a community, state, or national scale. The tool is a good starting point for understanding the condition of your local waters and educating your community. Users can enter an address or place name and find information on water safety conditions, waterbody impairment status, and current actions to restore or protect waters.

Getting Started: Tips for Building Watershed Partnerships

1. **Research existing or potential watershed-based partnerships in your area.** Contact your local citizen-based watershed group (e.g., see the River Network's "Who Protects Water?" Map), water utility (e.g., see EPA's Drinking Water Mapping Application to Protect Source Waters (DWMAPS)), or other conservation organizations to identify potential partners.
2. **Share your land conservation goals and experiences with watershed partners.** Has your organization already prioritized parcels for conservation in your service area? Share these with watershed partners

Landscape Characteristic	Why is it important?	Example Data Source
Natural land cover	Natural areas (e.g., forests, wetlands, natural grasslands) filter and process pollutants. They also support natural hydrology and flow patterns which help maintain healthy aquatic habitats and communities.	National Land Cover Database (NLCD)
Headwater streams	Headwater streams have important impacts on downstream water quality. The protection of headwater areas can support natural levels of water, sediment, and nutrient inflow to downstream waters.	National Hydrography Dataset (NHD)
Proximity to surface waters	Land near or within the riparian buffers that surround surface waters has a major influence on streamflow and water quality. Protecting natural lands in the broader floodplain also helps store and abate flood waters, thereby mitigating flooding impacts.	National Hydrography Dataset (NHD)
Critical groundwater areas	Lands near or above aquifer recharge areas, wellheads, and source water protection areas are critical to protecting groundwater and drinking water sources.	Contact local water utility or state drinking water agency

KENNEBEC ESTUARY LAND TRUST

Engaging communities through citizen monitoring

Central Lake Erie Basin Collaborative

Partnering across boundaries to protect Lake Erie

ARIZONA LAND AND WATER TRUST

Since 1978

Prioritizing land conservation to protect rivers and aquifers

FEATHER RIVER LAND TRUST

Stewardship through adaptive land management

ALACHUA CONSERVATION TRUST

Communicating watershed protection messages


Thank
you!