



**Buffalo Niagara River
Land Trust**

**Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust – FY24 Community Wide Assessment
Narrative Information Sheet**

The Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust is pleased to submit this proposal for FY2024 Brownfields Community Wide Assessment Grant funding. Below we provide the information requested.

Applicant Identification:

Legal Name: Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust

Doing Business As Name: Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust

Physical & Mailing Address: 52 Amherst Street, Buffalo, NY 14207

Funding Requested:

Assessment Grant Type: Community Wide Assessment Grant

Federal Funds Requested: \$500,000

Location: The target areas all proposed work is in the City of Buffalo, NY

City: Buffalo

County: Erie

State or Reservation: New York

Target Area and Priority Site Information:

Target Area Name	Census Tracts	Addresses of Priority Sites
31-73 Tonawanda	36029005500	31-73 Tonawanda Street, Buffalo, NY 14207
Elk Street	36029016400	882 Elk Street, Buffalo, NY
Leddy Street	36029000500	29, 49 and 59 Leddy Street, Buffalo NY



Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust

Contacts:

Project Director:

Name: Tracy Fletcher, Director of Operations- Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust

Phone: 716-998-0351 | Email: bnrlandtrustproxy@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 52 Amherst Street, Buffalo NY 14207

Chief Executive:

Daniel Riker, Board President Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust

Phone: 716-572-5312 | Email: driker@cscos.com

Mailing Address: 52 Amherst Street, Buffalo NY 14207

Population: All target areas are located within the City of Buffalo (population 276,486).

Other Factors	Page #
Community population is 10,000 or less.	NA
The applicant is, or will assist, a federally recognized Indian tribe or US territory.	NA
The priority site(s) is impacted by mine-scarred land.	NA
The priority site(s) is adjacent to a body of water (i.e., the border of the priority site(s) is contiguous or partially contiguous to the body of water, or would be contiguous or partially contiguous with a body of water but for a street, road, or other public thoroughfare separating them).	Page 1
The priority site(s) is in a federally designated flood plain.	Page 2
The reuse of the priority site(s) will facilitate renewable energy from wind, solar, or geothermal energy.	NA
The reuse of the priority site(s) will incorporate energy efficiency measures.	Page 3
The reuse strategy or project reuse of the priority site(s) considers climate adaptation and/or mitigation measures.	Page 3
At least 30% of the overall project budget will be spent on eligible reuse/area-wide planning activities, as described in Section I.B., for priority site(s) within the target area(s).	Page 9
The target area(s) is located within a community in which a coal-fired power plant has recently closed (2012 or later) or is closing.	NA



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Letter from the State or Tribal Environmental Authority: A letter of acknowledgement from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation is attached.

Releasing Copies of Applications: Not applicable.

NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Division of Environmental Remediation, Bureau of Program Management

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www.dec.ny.gov

November 6, 2023

Ms. Jennifer Flagg
Operations Manager
Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust
52 Amherst Street
Buffalo, NY 14207

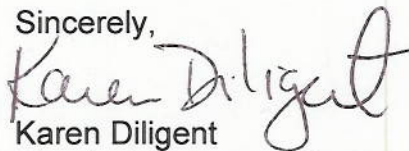
Dear Ms. Flagg:

This is to acknowledge that the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) received a request from the Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust, dated November 1, 2023, for a state acknowledgement letter for a Federal Year 2024 United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Brownfields grant.

I understand that the Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust plans to submit a Brownfield Community-Wide Assessment grant application for hazardous substances and petroleum in the amount of \$500,000. Focus of the funding will be to conduct Phase I/II Environmental Site Assessments at targeted sites throughout western New York. Sites include 31-73 Tonawanda Street, 825 Elk Street, and 29, 49, and 59 Leddy Street, all in the City of Buffalo. Funding will also be allocated for associated planning (including reuse and/or remediation planning) and community involvement activities. Please note that the USEPA criteria for an assessment grant specifies that, if selected, the Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust may only expend up to \$200,000 of the grant on a specific site.

DEC encourages initiatives to redevelop brownfields with the goal of mitigating any environmental and health impacts that they might pose.

Sincerely,



Karen Diligent

Director, Bureau of Program Management

ec: T. Wesley, USEPA Region 2
Y. DeJesus, USEPA Region 2
M. Cruden, DEC Albany
A. Caprio, DEC Region 9
S. Radon, DEC Region 9
R. Poczalski, DEC Region 9
D. Riker, Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

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1. PROJECT AREA DESCRIPTION AND PLANS FOR REVITALIZATION -

a.i. Target Area and Brownfields – Overview of Brownfield Challenges and Description of Target Area

From the University of Michigan Center for Sustainable Systems report, “Urban Green Space, Public Health and Environmental Justice: The Challenge of Making Cities ‘Just Green Enough’”, outlines how adding open green space and water access can be the first step to gentrification in urban areas. This application seeks to look for ways to create pocket parks at contaminated properties on the waterways located in environmental justice neighborhoods in the City of Buffalo that will benefit the residents, but not displace them. (Systems, 2014)

The Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust (BNRLT) began in 2017 to preserve properties along Western New York’s (WNY) waterways that are contaminated and in need of stewardship. The BNRLT's service area in WNY, includes properties on the Niagara River, Buffalo River, Scajaquada Creek, Cayuga Creek, and tributaries from Lake Erie to Lake Ontario. The BNRLT focuses on properties potentially contaminated by former land uses.

For the purposes of this application the BNRLT is focusing on property located along waterways in the City of Buffalo. Buffalo has a storied history as the terminus of the Erie Canal which opened access to the west for goods and settlement opportunities in the late 1800’s. With that commercial traffic Buffalo became a center for industrialization that began moving overseas in the 1960’s, leaving behind high levels of pollution and toxic contamination, poverty and neglect in many neighborhoods. The City of Buffalo has a rate of childhood poverty that is currently the 6th highest in the nation. Both the Buffalo River and the Niagara River where Scajaquada Creek flows, became EPA Areas of Concern (AOC) in 1987. In Buffalo, 28.3 percent of residents live below the poverty line, the 7th highest city percentage nationwide in 2021. Over half of Buffalo residents cannot afford rent, and one-fourth spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing. Buffalo’s median household income of \$39,677 is well below the national median household income of \$64,994. The city’s homeownership rate is 41 percent, compared to the national average of 64 percent. In the neighborhoods around the Buffalo River and Scajaquada Creek where the focus areas are located, toxicity and the loss of industry served to create impoverished neighborhoods where unemployment is high, rates of asthma are in the 90th+ percentiles and with some of the oldest housing stock in the nation where lead paint is endemic. The older housing stock and cold winters lead to high energy costs. Each of the target areas (TA’s) are shown as CEJST disadvantaged communities.

The water is impacted by activities on land. ‘Sources of potential pollution that caused impairments include contaminated sediment, combined sewer overflows, inactive hazardous waste sites and other point and non-point discharges. Contaminants in the river(s) and sediments include Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), heavy metals (lead and mercury), pesticides, and industrial organics.

Contaminants caused fish and wildlife populations to develop reproductive problems, tumors and other deformities. They also led to restrictions on consumption of fish from the AOC. Next to the waterways properties have been left vacant due to a question about the contaminants on the land.

Erie County, where the City of Buffalo is located, has begun to address these issues directly. The Draft Erie County Climate Action Plan lists a goal that aligns with this application: “Erie County will promote equitable nature-based solutions to protect intact landscapes, restore degraded ecosystems, and improve equitable access to green infrastructure, tree canopy, and open space for all residents. These efforts promote healthy natural resources, biodiversity, and resiliency by increasing the quality of life for humans and creating or protecting habitats for wildlife.” (Erie County, 2023)

The work of the BNRLT, the TA’s chosen, and the focus of Buffalo and Erie County to combat climate change come together in this application that includes involving communities, bringing solutions that will increase green space, improve health and clean water access without encouraging overt large scale economic development that could bring gentrification and displacement of the current residents of disadvantaged communities along Buffalo waterways.

ii. Description of the Priority Brownfield Site(s)

Tonawanda Street – Redevelopment has progressed in the area adjacent to the lots at 31-73 Tonawanda but these sites remain vacant due to unknown contamination and could provide water access if remediated. The Tonawanda Street BOA shows them as potential parks or ball fields. These properties along Tonawanda Street

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were once occupied by the manufacturer Pratt and Letchworth. The 36-acre facility was bounded by the New York Central Railroad and Scajaquada Creek, thus cutting off public access to the waterfront. Pratt & Letchworth sold off its saddlery business to focus on railroad components like gearboxes and couplings. These industrial operations included steel foundry and machine shop operations left a legacy of blight and the potential for petroleum and heavy metal contamination. ⁱⁱ This land is currently fenced, but the fencing is broken in several locations along the trail. By removing sources of contamination on this property, the water quality can be improved. By naturalizing the interface between water and land by removing hardscape and adding native plantings we can incorporate green infrastructure and access to the waterways, increase the tree canopy, and provide trail access and recreation as outlined in the Tonawanda BOA, page 149. 31 and 51 Tonawanda are FEMA floodplain lots, 71 is adjacent to that floodplain.

Elk Street - The BNRLT has a desire to create additional public waterfront access in the area of Houghton Park. Our public outreach in that part of the City of Buffalo has demonstrated that the community hungers for additional access to the Buffalo River. As such, three parcels along Elk Street and Bailey Avenue (819 and 883 Elk and 609 Bailey) offer an excellent opportunity to create a short waterfront trail that connects the two city streets. However, 819 Elk Street was once occupied by a few stores in the early 1900s that were demolished, causing concern about potential contaminants in fill that may have been used to backfill the site. Additionally, the property was home to a gasoline filling station with two underground storage tanks in the mid-1900s, suggesting the potential for petroleum contamination. Lastly, the historical uses of parcels upgradient of these waterfront properties included an asphalt plant along Bailey, an electric rail-car storage and repair facility on Elk, and three gasoline stations at the corner of Elk and Bailey. Therefore, contamination concerns at these sites include petroleum, heavy metals, and PCBs. All of these lots are listed in FEMA floodplain maps.

Leddy - The BNRLT understands that the Red Jacket Riverfront Park and the adjacent Redmond Park are important community assets. Additionally, the Western New York Land Conservancy is planning the design of an elevated pedestrian trail that passes through the area. The BNRLT supports these efforts and has identified opportunities to enhance these parks. Vacant land at 29, 49, and 59 Leddy Street provide an excellent chance to provide additional waterfront access adjacent to these parks. In addition to property purchase and/or placement of conservations easements, we plan to restore habitat with native plantings. However, contamination concerns include heavy metals, pesticides, and petroleum from the former use of a significant portion of the property as rail-related storage buildings and for food storage and processing. The historic use of upgradient properties included rail maintenance facilities with painting and machine shops and varnish and oil storage. These upgradient contaminant concerns include heavy metals, petroleum, and paints and solvents.

iii. Identifying Additional Sites

The BNRLT identifies sites in a number of different ways. First, through our **partnership with Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper** (BNW) <https://bnwaterkeeper.org/>. Waterkeeper works to restore sites and advocate for the waterways, but it is not in the mission to hold those sites that contain contamination. Many times, Waterkeeper will be the first to identify a parcel of land in need of stewardship through acquisition or easement.

BNRLT has a **Board of 20 environmentally experienced, committed volunteers** many of which work in environmental engineering, landscape architecture, environmental law or advocacy. They are often made aware of sites in need through their adjacent work in the community.

Community Involvement – At the beginning of each project a community participation plan is drafted and a series of public meetings are held or attended. BNRLT often attends existing events in order to go to where people are, and ask about sites and properties are important to them/how they envision better access to the sites and water.

Using a **specific GIS mapping tool** created by University at Buffalo for the use of BNRLT to identify sites, over 100 sites have been identified so far and the list needs updating with Phase 1 assessments. Unfortunately, there is no lack of sites that need assessment and community engagement, many also need cleanup in order to be made available to the public in the future. Following a thorough revision of the inventory, the BNRLT uses a **prioritization system to select parcels for assessment**. This system includes an evaluation of

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the opportunities presented by each parcel in terms of habitat restoration, quality of waterfront access, and community need.

b.i. Revitalization of the Target Area - Reuse Strategy and Alignment with Revitalization Plans

The City of Buffalo currently has three designated **Brownfield Opportunity Area's (BOA)- Tonawanda Street BOA, Buffalo River Corridor BOA and South Buffalo BOA**, that the BNRLT works within to help stimulate revitalization and reuse of targeted properties. Those BOA's guide the work of the BNRLT and inform a starting point for the community conversations and ultimate plans for site reuse following Phase 1 and possible Phase 2 ESA's that will give us an understanding of how the sites can be returned to use for the community. Additionally, The BOAs included a great deal of community outreach to gather input and found that waterfront access and cleanup of contaminated sites were high priorities in each study.

The main focus of the BNRLT is community water access. This can be for passive or active recreation or as a part of the trail system that continues to grow throughout Buffalo. In addition to the BOA's, the **Niagara River Greenway Trail Plan** informs our work when the possibility exists to create, extend or connect a property to the greater trail network. All three priority properties are within the Niagara River Greenway Trail's focus area. And both the **Buffalo River and the Niagara River** (which Scajaquada Creek is a tributary) are **AOC's**. This application builds on the work started within those plans and funding, current and past. The City of Buffalo recently updated the zoning code, **Buffalo Green Code Unified Development Ordinance**. "The plan focuses on three core strategies: fuel economic generators, restore neighborhoods, and repair environmental assets". (Buffalo, 2019).

The **DRAFT Erie County Plan Community Climate Action Plan** contains a goal that aligns with BNRLT reuse plans as noted above. (Erie County, 2023).

The Riverline Plan includes the properties at Leddy Street. The Western New York Land Conservancy (WNYLC) is developing *The Riverline* based on a vision created by the community. BNRLT will work with the WNYLC and the Riverline for plans at Leddy Street. (Conservancy, n.d.)

Finally, both the City of Buffalo and Erie County are designated **NY Climate Smart Communities**. There are opportunities to work with the steering committees for those two designations to incorporate any energy efficiency or renewable energy generation elements that may be appropriate for these sites and to contribute to a reduction in energy usage by increasing the tree canopy to lower heat islands in disadvantaged urban neighborhoods.

ii. Outcomes and Benefits of Reuse Strategies

The BNRLT is looking to create opportunities for green space at each of these locations that is appropriate and safe for community use for passive or active recreation. Where possible, trail creation and connectivity is a priority and will be designed within the larger regional trail plans. Increasing the tree canopy and thereby lowering the heat island index in urban communities and naturalizing the interface between the water and the land will both help reduce energy consumption and keep residents cool as annual summer temperatures increase.

Revitalization of these properties offers opportunities for jobs in the cleanup and reuse of each space including any buildout of amenities that support the goals and needs of the neighborhood. Opportunities to train individuals in this work exist at these job sites alongside local workforce development and job training entities.

The revitalized sites will stimulate private investment in the neighboring properties by offering the amenities of greenspace, recreation and trail connectivity in the area which is attractive to business and residential developers. That in turn will generate new tax revenue and overall economic development. But the goal is to *not* overheat the economies in these neighborhoods in a way that will lead to gentrification and displacement. The goal is to offer environmental justice communities the same natural amenities that higher income neighborhoods enjoy.

c. i. Strategy for Leveraging Resources - Resources Needed for Site Reuse

There are currently three BOAs (NY State's brownfield planning program) in Buffalo, NY and they Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust – Community Wide Assessment FY2024

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include 2 of our priority sites and adjacency to the 3rd and include a large portion of the property that BNRLT targets for assessment, planning and reuse under the mission of the land trust.

Those three BOAs contain a long list of resources that could be leveraged for properties contained within the boundaries and we would look to those sources for potential funding. They include NYS’s Brownfield Cleanup program, and funding under the Environmental Restoration Program and the Consolidated Funding Application. There is also the potential at some sites for New Markets Tax Credits and Historic Preservation Tax Incentives. National Grid offers funding under their Shovel Ready and Main Street programs as well as the new Project C and the National Grid Foundation. The Ralph C. Wilson Jr. Foundation and NYS Office of Parks and Historic Preservation have funding for trails and trail connectivity. The BNRLT has received several grants from the Land Trust Alliance and are in discussions for possible funding at some sites from NYS Parks and Trails.

We would also seek funding from corporate and private sources for activities like community input, understanding contaminants and invasive species, naturalizing the waterfront, and tying it to the trail network that now stretches across New York.

In addition, both the City of Buffalo and the County of Erie are designated NYS Climate Smart Communities, and we will look to work with those 2 task forces to pursue funding from the New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA).

Source	Purpose/Role	Amount	Status
National Grid – Shovel Ready	Economic Development	\$ 250,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed
Brownfield Redevelopment	Redevelopment activities		Potential. To be applied for if needed
Main Street – National Grid	Economic Development	\$ 500,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed
Project C – National Grid	Outdoor Recreation	\$ 25,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed
NYS Brownfield Cleanup	Site Cleanup	\$ 100,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed
NYSDEC Environmental Protection Fund	Site Cleanup		Potential. To be applied for if needed
NYS Parks and Trails grants	Trails / Outdoor Recreation	\$ 50,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed
Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program	Outdoor Recreation	\$ 75,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed
Fish and Wildlife Service		\$ 50,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation	Trails/ Community Access	\$ 100,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed
Land Trust Alliance	Site Revitalization	\$ 50,000.00	Potential. To be applied for if needed

ii. Use of Existing Infrastructure

Use of Existing Infrastructure: The BNRLT will inventory existing infrastructure readily available at the Priority Sites, including water, sewer, storm water, gas, electricity, public transportation, and broadband to support the proposed redevelopment and reuse activities. In most instances, the existing infrastructure has the capacity to handle this expansion, as well as catalyze redevelopment. Buffalo was designed to accommodate a population of 1 million, and that number never materialized. Infill of vacant sites is a priority fully utilize what the City was designed to accommodate. Some of those infill sites on the water are perfect for green space as neighborhoods repopulate.

Community input included in the BOA’s indicated strong support for improved walking and biking trail networks. The trail infrastructure is sorely lacking and needs projects such as this to meet that community goal. The current street network in the City of Buffalo provides only very limited access to the waterfront if any at all. But at Tonawanda Street there is an existing bike trail infrastructure (Jesse Kregal Pathway) that could be tied into and provide access to and from the site and the water. Tonawanda Street has begun revitalizing the properties and buildings adjacent to the priority parcels identified in this grant application. That has come about as the re-development of the Niagara Street Corridor has proceeded North providing a complete streets infrastructure and a flurry of re-development activities. The Community is also calling for additional non-motorized watercraft

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launches – some exist but not enough this is included in BNRLT priorities for site revitalizations.

Similarly, the parcels in the area of Elk Street provide an opportunity to create a linear park along the Buffalo River and give access to nearby residents and workers. People are clamoring for additional waterfront access in this part of the City, and these parcels provide an excellent opportunity for that with the attendant advantages of tree cover and naturalizing the waterfront.

The properties on Leddy Street Buffalo provide an opportunity to increase the size and habitat quality of the waterfront access to the Buffalo River. They could add access to the waterfront parkland, and we can replace the invasive species present with native plantings, increasing the habitat value of the properties.

c.a.i , ii. & (1)COMMUNITY NEED AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT- Threats to Sensitive Populations

All three priority areas are above the 90th percentile for low-income residents, and two of the three have high minority populations. The City of Buffalo’s poverty rate is 27.6%. With a population of 278,349, Buffalo has the sixth highest youth poverty rate in the country. 22.5% of Buffalo residents are under 18 years of age, and 41.8% of those children live below the federal poverty level. Buffalo has a high minority population with 33.3% of its residents being African American and 12.2% Hispanic and a significant number of immigrants and refugees. (Bureau, 2022). Unemployment: The 2021 Unemployment rate in the Census Tracts bordering the Buffalo River (Elk and Leddy) is an average of 7.7% (over 2 points higher than the US average of 5.5%) with an average per capita income of only \$28,062.56 (versus the US average of \$37,638).

(2) Greater Than Normal Incidence of Disease and Adverse Health Conditions

The chart below taken from CEJST and the EJ Mapping Tool demonstrates the disease and adverse health conditions of the TA’s. The sites are above the 90th percentile in asthma and lead paint as well as proximity to hazardous waste.

	36029005500 Tonawanda	36029016400 Elk	36029000500 Leddy
CEJST	US Percentile		
Population	4,159	2,870	1,706
Minority	44%	74%	21%
Low Income	94th	93rd	94th
Projected Flood Risk	92nd	84th	97th
Energy Cost	80th	85th	90th
Asthma	94th	97th	94th
Low Life Expectancy	94th	79th	90th
Lead Paint	98th	91st	99th
Proximity to Hazardous Waste	93rd	95th	94th
Proximity to Risk Management Plan Facilities	85th	99th	99th
Traffic Volume	61st	93rd	68th
Poverty	96th	96th	95th
Less than High School	16%	22%	23%
EJ Screen	US Percentile		
Heart Disease	54	56	88
Asthma	95	84	97
Cancer	16	43	37
Disabilities	65	79	96

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The New York State Department of Health conducted the Healthy Fishing Communities Program in collaboration with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to assess human exposure to contaminants common to Lake Ontario, Lake Erie and surrounding rivers and waterways among populations in western New York State who eat locally caught fish. Biomonitoring results showed that both groups had higher geometric means for blood lead, total blood mercury, and serum PFOS compared to the 2013–2014 NHANES reference levels. The Burmese refugee group also showed higher geometric means for creatinine-adjusted urine mercury and lipid-adjusted serum DDE compared to national levels. Licensed angler participants reported eating a median of 16 locally caught fish meals in the past year. (Medicine, 2019). This Burmese community fishes the Niagara River, often near or on Scajaquada Creek. Other subsistence fishing takes place regularly on the Buffalo River both Elk Street and Leddy. Cleaning up adjacent land parcels is key to eliminating the toxins in the water that cause this pollution.

(3) Environmental Justice

Factors outlined above demonstrate how the priority areas are all Environmental Justice neighborhoods. A long history of disinvestment followed the exodus of industry from these areas that left a trail of contamination in their wake. While creating large green spaces in urban areas often leads to gentrification, we seek to create smaller pockets of green that will benefit the community without over stimulating the economic development and lead to displacement.

(a) Identification of Environmental Justice Issues - The following are issues identified as EJ issues for BNRLT prioritization at these sites: Heat islands in urban neighborhoods, access for safe subsistence fishing, reducing elevated levels of asthma and high energy costs. All of these issues can be addressed by creating green spaces in the EJ neighborhoods. Additionally, community residents will enjoy increased access to nature, water and recreation that will help alleviate mental health and stress issues.

(b) Advancing Environmental Justice - BNRLT will work alongside other organizations who are addressing climate change issues by increasing green space and access such as the Erie County Low Income Program for Sustainable Energy (ECLIPSE) which has maps that show burdens of high energy costs on the low-income community. They note that by increasing the tree canopy, heat islands temps are lowered, and asthma is reduced as air quality improves. Trees provide shade on high temperature days and barriers to wind and events such as significant snowfall as Buffalo often experiences.

The Tonawanda Street BOA established the Scajaquada Creek Initiative Working Group to control and eliminate sources of pollution along the Creek and recently received a large grant to do this work. The consultant hired under this grant would reach out to coordinate with the Working Group on issues at Tonawanda Street and any other areas along Scajaquada Creek.

b. i. Community Engagement - Project Involvement

In previous BNRLT projects much of the work has been focused on community engagement to (1) provide educational opportunities that encourage the community gain a better understanding of the habitats and their potential benefits, (2) better understand the community’s desires and concerns related to the Priority Conservation Areas, and (3) specify a strategy for development of passive recreational opportunities and invasive species remediation/management. This is the foundation for the work that BNRLT will do with each priority area under this grant.

ii. Project Roles - List of Organizations/Entities/Groups & Roles :

Name of organization	Point of contact	Specific involvement in the project
Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust	Tracy Fletcher tracy@bnrlandtrust.org	Grant Lead – will hire consultants and work with those consultants on Assessment, Community Engagement and Reuse Planning. Will also perform all grant management tasks. Will utilize extensive Board member knowledge and experience to inform and guide all aspects of the grant tasks including reporting and environmental work.

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Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper	Sandy Smith ssmith@bnwaterkeeper.org	Community Partner: Identifying sites, teaming on creating natural landscapes, community engagement
Joy Kuebler Landscape Architects	Joy Kuebler jkuebler@jklastudio.com	Community organizer contributing strategies for community engagement
Kaisertown Friends Association	Amanda Blum anblum@buffalo.edu	Community group: Community engagement at Elk Street
Seneca Babcock Community Association	Brian Pilarski brian@senecababcock.com	Community group: Community engagement at Elk Street
Valley Community Association	Denise Pikuzinski Dpikuzinski@thevalleycenter.com	Community group: Community engagement at Leddy Street
Old First Ward Community Center	Patrick Gormley director@old1stward.org	Community group: Community engagement at Leddy Street
Westminster Economic Development Initiative	Carolynn Welch info@wedibuffalo.org	Community group: Community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street
West Side Community Services	Crystal Selk director@wscsbuffalo.org	Community group: Community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street
City of Buffalo – NYS Climate Smart Community Task Force	Josh McClain mccain3@buffalo.edu	For consistency with City Climate Smart Goals and established plans
Scajaquada Creek Corridor Coalition	Zhi Tin Phua zhi@bfloparks.org	Community group: community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street
Black Rock Riverside Alliance	Anne McCoey BRRAlliance2@outlook.com	Community group: community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street
Region Central	Hal Morse hmorse@gbnrtc.org	Community group: community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street

iii. Incorporating Community Input

The BNRLT is committed to working with the community to gather robust input and buy in by the surrounding community for work at each location chosen. The expertise of the Board has informed a process that includes the following steps to engage the local community.

Phase I. Spread the Word: Education sessions where BNRLT will share project information through multiple channels to reach community members who hold a vested interest. Drone images, videos and maps will highlight key landscape features and access points. Information will be shared on the BNRLT’s website, social media, and mainstream media.

Phase II. Gather Community Input and Engage in Collaborative Planning: We will host interactive walking tours of the Priority Areas and two facilitated community workshops each at venues in the local neighborhoods to hear from residents about what is most important to them. These sessions are also educational opportunities for the community to see the need for stewardship in the long term. A topographic/site survey of the property will be conducted to evaluate the landscape for potential improvements and craft a plan for invasive species management.

Phase III. Develop Phased Master Plan for Remediation and Future Development: A master plan consisting of proposed phases will be developed in consultation with the community to ensure their interests and needs are met, while invasive species concerns are addressed. It will include a species inventory, site plan, remediation strategies, and a road map for phased implementation, and a list of potential funding sources. The final master plan will be widely disseminated through the same channels used in spreading the word.

Phase IV. Implement Master Plan: (To be completed AFTER the proposed project is complete) The BNRLT is committed to maintaining the Priority Areas in their open and natural condition, protecting scenic and natural features for birds, fish, and other wildlife. We hope to provide new opportunities for passive recreational use, and limit development to protect the existing habitat and conserve these natural resources.

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3. TASK DESCRIPTIONS, COST ESTIMATES, AND MEASURING PROGRESS

a. Description of Tasks/Activities and Outputs

Task 1 – Brownfield Inventory and Ranking
i. Project Implementation: BNRLT, with assistance from QEP and input from community, will compile an area-wide and Target Area brownfields inventory. Criteria used to prioritize and select sites for grant activities is anticipated to include perceived and/or actual environmental concerns and health risks, community input and needs, redevelopment interest or potential, and impact/benefits to underserved communities and sensitive populations.
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Primary activities will occur during Year One of the grant period with ongoing updates throughout the 4-year project period.
iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): BNRLT staff with support from selected consultant
iv. Outputs: GIS-based brownfield site inventory, ranking criteria and evaluation, list of priority sites for assessment
Task 2 – Phase I ESAs
i. Project Implementation: Phase I Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) will be completed in accordance with current, EPA approved ASTM Standard Practice (E1527), and EPA’s “All Appropriate Inquiry” requirements. Performance of 35 Phase I ESAs at \$4,000 each
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Activities will be ongoing throughout the 4-year project period.
iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): BNRLT staff with support from the consultant
iv. Outputs: Phase I ESA reports, Updating ACRES
Task 3 – Phase II ESAs
i. Project Implementation: Site-specific Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) will be prepared and approved by EPA prior to Phase II activities. Phase II ESAs/ HBM surveys will be completed to confirm/dismiss presence of impacts in accordance with ASTM’s most current standard. QEP will conduct Phase II ESAs/HMB surveys, help enroll sites into the state’s voluntary cleanup program, if applicable, and prepare report(s) for regulatory compliance. Cleanup/reuse planning may also be conducted in accordance with EPA’s Greener Remediation guidance and will consider climate resiliency. Phase II ESA data may be used to develop Analysis of Brownfields Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA)/Reuse Plans. Proposed alternatives will be evaluated based on cost, feasibility, and effectiveness in protecting human health and the environment. Task may also evaluate options for compliance under the state cleanup program, if applicable, identify response actions and/or land use restrictions to achieve regulatory closure. Performance of 4 Phase II ESAs at \$44,000 each
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Activities will be ongoing throughout the 4-year project period.
iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): BNRLT staff with support from the consultant
iv. Outputs: Site inventories, Assessment reports, Cleanup site plans, Updating ACRES
Task 4 – Community Engagement
i. Project Implementation: Walking tours, facilitated community meetings, A topographic/site survey of the properties, educational opportunities, social media postings and interactions.
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Activities will be ongoing throughout the 4-year project period. Meetings are anticipated at least monthly. Many of the events will be regularly scheduled meetings and events in the environmental justice communities impacted in order to meet the residents “where they are”. When necessary online access or meetings will be scheduled and interpretation provided.
iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): BNRLT staff with support from the consultant. Meetings will be set up with community partners, at community centers and churches in the neighborhoods where projects are taking place and in conjunction with the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority. Meetings will be publicized on the both the BNRLT and community organizations websites and social media as well as through email lists and newsletters. Local media will be contacted about upcoming meetings where appropriate.
iv. Outputs: Community Meetings, Social Media posts. QR codes will be used to allow participants to fill out a survey and paper surveys will be distributed at meetings for those who do not have online access. Responses will be collected and used for planning purposes during the grant period and beyond.
Task 5 – Travel
i. Project Implementation: Attend USEPA Brownfield conferences, including speaking on panels and giving presentations to describe benefits of USEPA grant funds relative to non-profit land trusts and waterfront access on brownfield sites
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Yearly, for 4 years as scheduled by USEPA

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iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): BNRLT staff (Operations Manager) and at least one board member to each event
iv. Outputs: Attendance at USEPA Brownfield conference, attending workshops and educational events, PowerPoint presentations
Task 6 – Grant Management
i. Project Implementation: Periodic reporting, ACRES inputs EPA-funded activities: Manage C.A. oversight activities; EPA Reporting (ACRES, MBE/WBE, FFR and Quarterly Reports, Close Out); Procure and manage qualified environmental professional (QEP); Maintain financial records and complete drawdowns; Maintain project files and information repository; project coordination with stakeholders; Site Eligibility Determination Forms; Compliance with Section 106 Historic Preservation Act, as applicable; Execute access agreements with private property owners; quarterly Brownfields Advisory Committee meetings, ensure program remains on schedule/budget.
ii. Anticipated Project Schedule: Ongoing throughout 4 year grant period; Quarterly Reports submitted within 30 days after end of each reporting period (Jan/April/July/Oct). Annual FFR and M/W/DBE reports submitted by October 30 of each grant year. ACRES updated when assessments are started/completed, new information becomes available, and at other major milestones.
iii. Task/Activity Lead(s): BNRLT staff
iv. Outputs: Updating ACRES, 16 Quarterly Reports, 4 annual reports, Initial and updated grant project schedules

b. Cost Estimates

Budget Categories	Project Tasks (\$)						Total
	Task 1 Inventory and Ranking	Task 2 Phase 1 ESAs	Task 3 Phase II ESA's	Task 4 Community Engagement	Task 5 Travel	Task 6 Grant Management	
Personnel	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Fringe Benefits	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Travel ¹	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$9,000	\$ -	\$ 9,000
Equipment ²	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Supplies	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Contractual	\$ 100,000	\$140,000	\$176,000	\$ 50,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$466,000
Construction ³	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Other	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,000
Total Direct	\$ 100,000	\$140,000	\$176,000	\$ 50,000	\$9,000	\$ 25,000	\$500,000
Indirect Cost	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total Budget	\$ 100,000	\$140,000	\$176,000	\$ 50,000	\$9,000	\$ 25,000	\$500,000

c. Plan to Measure and Evaluate Environmental Progress and Results

ACRES will be the main way data is gathered and used for evaluating and reporting progress. The Operations Manager for the BNRLT will update the program on a regular basis including adding the basic information for sites assessed, the Phase 1 report along with climate and economic impact data. Quarterly reports will be generated using the ACRES data along with information about the community meetings, walking tours, educational opportunities, and social media engagement.

One of the BNRLT's board members, Amy Schifferli (formerly Fisk) has managed USEPA Brownfield Grants on behalf of Niagara County for almost two decades, and Amy has created brownfield inventories and assessed 100s of sites under her management. Amy, as well as many consultants working under her grants, have Microsoft Project to create project schedules and important milestones. These grant schedules are reviewed on a regular basis and updated as tasks are advanced and completed. The software allows for interim deadlines and easy identification of progress issues. The BNRLT will rely on Amy's experience to create and routinely maintain a master Microsoft Project schedule for the grants and use the schedule as another tool for tracking progress and making mid-schedule corrections.

New sites will be identified with the input of the staff, the Board, members of the public and our partner organizations such as Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper. The consultant hired will be tasked with creating a

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scoring method for selecting sites with a matrix to include things such as: climate, EJ, reuse, disadvantaged communities, prevalence of disease (cancer, asthma or birth defects). They will work with the GIS software mentioned above as well as CEJST and bring sites for potential evaluation to the board with the scoring for that site. The Board will then choose which sites will proceed to both Ph1 or Ph2 ESA's. All of this work will be included in the quarterly reports.

4. a. PROGRAMMATIC CAPABILITY AND PAST PERFORMANCE - Programmatic Capability

The BNRLT was established in 2012 and has a proven record of effectively managing grant programs in compliance with all regulations and policies. BNRLT is currently seeking funding to add a full-time Executive Director position that will be charged with leadership and sustainability as well as supplementing and supporting the work of the Director of Operations. A grant writing consultant is engaged who is continually looking for new funding opportunities for BNRLT projects.

The Operations Manager will administer the grant through preparing periodic reports; coordinating with EPA staff; managing consultants; managing budgets; and updating the BNRLT Board of Directors. Our Director of Operations, Tracy Fletcher, has over 15 years of managing non-profits and grant programs of similar scale to the EPA funding.

The BNRLT Land Committee will work with the Operations Manager to implement the grant, as it has the primary responsibility for exploring new property and easement acquisitions; assessing the potential of each proposed parcel; and providing recommendations to the overall Board for future work. The Land Committee is comprised of a number of landscape architects, environmental engineers and scientists, and geologists whose focus is the remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites. The Land Committee is led by Steve Frank and Michelle Bodewes, both of whom focus on brownfield redevelopment projects and have worked on multiple EPA-funded brownfield projects in their careers while at Li-Ro engineers and Kheops, respectively. Dan Riker, Board President, will also be involved in the EPA project. Dan has over 30 years in environmental consulting and has worked on dozens of EPA-funded assessment and remediation projects.

Lastly, BNRLT Board member Amy Fisk-Schifferli will play a significant role in implementing the grant. In her work at Niagara County, Amy has managed multiple EPA Brownfield Assessment grants as well as a very successful Revolving Loan Fund program. Amy is viewed as one of the experts in EPA brownfield work and has presented at many of EPA's brownfield conferences, including the most recent event in Detroit in 2023.

b. ii. Past Performance and Accomplishments - Has Not Received an EPA Brownfields Grant but has Received other Grants

Grant: 1660 Niagara Access Improvement Grant

Funder: LTA - NYS Conservation Partnership Program-Stewardship & Resource Mgmt Grant

Amount: \$30,000

Date Awarded: April 25, 2019

Purpose and Accomplishments: The project consisted of putting in trees, pathways, native plantings and a kayak launch. The finishes included: a native plant garden, rocks to sit on, an historic marker and a descriptive marker. The site has had a number of native visitors and is well on its way to becoming a habitat along the Niagara River.

Compliance with Grant Agreements: Final Report completed January 15, 2020

Grant: Ship Canal Conservation Area: Engaging the Community in Education, Restoration and Preservation

Funder: Land Trust Alliance

Amount: \$50,000

Date Awarded: 02/28/2023* BNRLT is still operating under this grant.

Purpose and Accomplishments: Project Summary from application: This property is planned to provide public access to the water and will connect to an existing trail system. This project will be used to engage the community in development of a phased greenspace Master Plan and seek funds to implement the plan.

Compliance with Grant Agreements: Final reporting is not yet complete.

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ⁱ <https://info.nystateofhealth.ny.gov/sites/default/files/Ichor%20Strategies%20-%20Pain%20Point%20Analysis%20-%20Buffalo.pdf>

ⁱⁱ https://buffalonews.com/news/local/history/bn-chronicles-black-rock-s-pratt-letchworth-buffalo-s-original-ironworks/article_1cbfcb12-d05b-11eb-92fc-8b7d749258fc.html

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Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust

Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust, Buffalo, NY Threshold Criteria

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:

Applicant Type: Regional Land Trust

Eligibility: The Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust is a 501c3 organization established under NYS Not-for-Profit Corporation Law.

ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION:

Eligibility documentation for the BNRLT is provided in Attachment B and includes:

- Bylaws
- Documentation of tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
BNRLT does not have a 501c4 status and does not engage in lobbying activities

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

In previous BNRLT projects much of the work has been focused on community engagement to (1) provide educational opportunities that encourage the community gain a better understanding of the habitats and their potential benefits, (2) better understand the community's desires and concerns related to the Priority Conservation Areas, and (3) specify a strategy for development of passive recreational opportunities and invasive species remediation/management. This is the foundation for the work that BNRLT will do with each priority area under this grant.

Project phases include:

Phase I. Spread the Word: Education sessions where BNRLT will share project information through multiple channels to reach community members who hold a vested interest. Drone images, videos and maps will highlight key landscape features and access points. Information will be shared on the BNRLT's website, social media, and mainstream media.

Phase II. Gather Community Input and Engage in Collaborative Planning: We will host interactive walking tours of the Priority Areas and two facilitated community workshops each at venues in the local neighborhoods to hear from residents about what is most important to them. These sessions are also educational opportunities for the community to see the need for stewardship in the long term. A topographic/site survey of the property will be conducted to evaluate the landscape for potential improvements and craft a plan for invasive species management.

Phase III. Develop Phased Master Plan for Remediation and Future Development: A master plan consisting of proposed phases will be developed in consultation with the community to ensure their interests and needs are met, while invasive species concerns are addressed. It will include a species inventory, site plan, remediation strategies, and a road map for phased implementation, and a list of potential funding sources. The final master



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plan will be widely disseminated through the same channels used in spreading the word.

Phase IV. Implement Master Plan: (To be completed AFTER the proposed project is complete) The BNRLT is committed to maintaining the Priority Areas in their open and natural condition, protecting scenic and natural features for birds, fish, and other wildlife. We hope to provide new opportunities for passive recreational use, and limit development to protect the existing habitat and conserve these natural resources. Organizations that BNRLT has worked with in the past include:

Organizations Involved Include:

Name of organization	Point of contact	Specific involvement in the project
Buffalo Niagara River Land Trust	Tracy Fletcher tracy@bnrlandtrust.org	Grant Lead – will hire consultants and work with those consultants on Assessment, Community Engagement and Reuse Planning. Will also perform all grant management tasks. Will utilize extensive Board member knowledge and experience to inform and guide all aspects of the grant tasks including reporting and environmental work.
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper	Sandy Smith ssmith@bnwaterkeeper.org	Community Partner: Identifying sites, teaming on creating natural landscapes, community engagement
Joy Kuebler Landscape Architects	Joy Kuebler jkuebler@jklstudio.com	Community organizer contributing strategies for community engagement
Kaisertown Friends Association	Amanda Blum anblum@buffalo.edu	Community group: Community engagement at Elk Street
Seneca Babcock Community Association	Brian Pilarski brian@senecababcock.com	Community group: Community engagement at Elk Street
Valley Community Association	Denise Pikuzinski Dpikuzinski@thevalleycenter.com	Community group: Community engagement at Leddy Street
Old First Ward Community Center	Patrick Gormley director@old1stward.org	Community group: Community engagement at Leddy Street
Westminster Economic Development Initiative	Carolynn Welch info@wedibuffalo.org	Community group: Community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street
West Side Community Services	Crystal Selk director@wscsbuffalo.org	Community group: Community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street
City of Buffalo – NYS Climate Smart Community Task Force	Josh McClain mccclain3@buffalo.edu	For consistency with City Climate Smart Goals and established plans
Scajaquada Creek Corridor Coalition	Zhi Tin Phua zhi@bfloparks.org	Community group: community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street
Black Rock Riverside Alliance	Anne McCooy BRRAlliance2@outlook.com	Community group: community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street
Region Central	Hal Morse hmorse@gbnrct.org	Community group: community engagement at 31-73 Tonawanda Street



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OPEN GRANTS:

BNRLT does not have an open Assessment Grant or Multipurpose Grant.

CONTRACTORS AND NAMED SUBRECIPIENTS:

BNRLT will use a competitive bidding process and will use NYS Contract Reporter and the Erie County List of Minority and Women Owned Businesses to solicit RFP responses from certified M/WBE firms. No contractors have been selected for this work prior to the submission of the application to EPA.