2017 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Application Available On-line: September 16, 2016
Pre-Proposal Due Date: October 13, 2016 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time
Full Proposal Due Date: December 1, 2016 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time

OVERVIEW

NFWF's Sea Turtles Program consists of a portfolio of 10-year business plans to guide conservation investments that will measurably improve the current recovery trajectory of seven sea turtle populations in the Western Hemisphere: leatherbacks, Kemp’s ridleys, loggerheads, and hawksbills in the Northwest Atlantic, and leatherbacks, loggerheads and hawksbills in the Eastern Pacific. This Request for Proposals will award up to $500,000 in Fish and Wildlife Service funds for sea turtle conservation. Available funding will vary from year to year depending on implementation needs of the business plans and other requirements within the marine and coastal programs conservation portfolio.

Key conservation strategies for this program include:

- Reduce incidental capture in fishing gear - support incentive-based approaches for the development and implementation of turtle-friendly fishing gear and practices;
- Reduce or eliminate direct exploitation of turtles and turtle eggs - create incentives to reduce or eliminate poaching, hunting and directed fishing of sea turtles through law enforcement, development of alternative livelihoods for poachers, reduction of feral dogs and other nest predators, and improve outreach and education to local communities;
- Build strong regional networks to implement conservation goals – establish standardized methods and learning networks across the population range as well as coordinated monitoring networks to evaluate the progress of conservation efforts.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The majority of projects will take place in the Western Hemisphere within the migratory range of the seven populations within the portfolio. Geographic priorities are specific to the priority strategies for each population in the conservation portfolio. Applicants should reference the appropriate business plan and the Program Priorities section below for further guidance.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The most competitive projects under the Spring 2017 cycle of the Sea Turtles Program will directly implement projects under the following business plan strategies. Projects outside of
these priority areas or that indirectly influence these topics are still eligible for funding provided they support the goals and objectives outlined in the Sea Turtle Conservation Business Plan, the Eastern Pacific Leatherback Investment Strategy, Eastern Pacific Hawksbill Business Plan and the Caribbean Hawksbill Investment Strategy. Strategy numbers denote specific references to the business plan for that species which should be referenced for more information.

EP leatherback

- **Strategy 1.1 Reduce bycatch in areas identified as having high interaction rates:** Port-based surveys have identified several ports as priority for further assessment and mitigation (e.g., Ecuador: Manta and Santa Rosa; Peru: Salaverry, Pisco, San Jose, and Ilo; Chile: Coquimbo) which are prioritized for bycatch reduction activities. Projects under this priority will build capacity for and implement testing of configurations and technologies in fishing gear (e.g. gillnets, trammel nets and longlines) in Ecuador and Peru and/or Chile to meet bycatch reduction goals in these ports. Proposals should characterize the fishery, articulate the bycatch rate and known drivers of interaction and how the industry will be engaged toward solutions at the proposed location.

- **Strategy 2.2 - Increase productivity of priority nesting beaches:** Priority nesting beaches for Eastern Pacific leatherbacks are found in Mexico, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica. Projects under this priority will identify and implement activities that will improve hatchling production in these locations through tangible approaches such as (but not limited to) reduction of light pollution, revegetation, and targeted maintenance of nests to increase hatching success. Proposals should reference the relative threat of the proposed activity at the proposed location and measurable targets for hatchling production as a result of activities.

EP hawksbill

- **Strategy 1 Stabilize Productivity at Critical Nesting Beaches:** The business plan provides a three phased strategy to continue to increase and stabilize nesting productivity on critical nesting beaches as identified in the plan to maintain an annual cohort of hatchlings of 40,000 or more by 2019. Priority projects will directly reference the activities and milestones outlined in the business plan as relevant to the specific location where work is proposed and how the activities of the location will progress from the current status to these milestones through the proposed activities.

- **Strategy 2 Reduce mortality from bycatch:** The business plan outlines a four-part strategy to understand and reduce the impacts of bycatch in known priority geographies for two priority fisheries identified in a preliminary bycatch assessment. Emphasis for this solicitation is to address activities 1-3 for key areas that have been identified in and around the Gulf of Fonseca as areas of high interaction and activity four for the lobster fishery priority areas of Punta Amapala, El Salvador and La Salvia, Nicaragua.
Caribbean hawksbill

- **Strategies 1. A&B** Assessment of fishing threats to priority in-water areas and Develop and pilot locally relevant turtle safe gear/methods: Quantify and provide targeted reduction strategies of bycatch in hot spot areas off the Dominican Republic and develop a bycatch reduction strategy for previously identified hotspots for the priority locations in Haiti and Mexico. Reduction projects should include specific targets in bycatch reduction and strategies to meet these targets over a particular time period and estimated budget. Mitigation strategies should also include a cost analysis assessment to the industry as part of the testing/pilots and an in-water monitoring strategy to track progress over time.

- **Strategy 3.A** Assess the threat of habitat loss to the high producing nesting beaches: Collate and/or collect information on threats facing hatching production on index beaches as identified in the Caribbean Hawksbill Investment Strategy. Project must quantify what the most pressing threats are (e.g., development, sea level rise, lighting) and outline prioritized tangible mitigation efforts to include anticipated impact, timeline and estimated costs.

**PROJECT METRICS**

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency between the monitoring data provided by multiple grant projects, the Sea Turtles Program has a list of metrics in Easygrants for grantees to choose from for reporting. These metrics are not formally reported at the Pre-Proposal stage however it is important for applicants to frame their narrative in a way that they will be able to report on relevant metrics if invited to submit a Full Proposal. At the Full Proposal stage, we ask that you select the 1-4 **most relevant metrics** from this list for your project. Other metrics are available for common activities found in sea turtle projects; however proposals should build in monitoring programs that will capture at least one of these seven that is most applicable to their goals. If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Michelle Pico (pico@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

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<tr>
<th>Project Activity</th>
<th>Recommended Metric</th>
<th>Additional Guidance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development of best management practices for turtle conservation</td>
<td>Planning, Research, Monitoring- Turtle - BMP development - # BMP recommendations developed</td>
<td>This metric applies to both nesting beach management practices and bycatch reduction practices. In the notes section please describe the BMP</td>
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<td>Research projects which generate a report including elements for management uptake</td>
<td>Planning, Research, Monitoring- Turtle - Research - # research studies completed</td>
<td>A given project should only ever report a value of 1 for this metric and only if the research is complete to the point of making a management decision.</td>
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<td>ELIGIBILITY</td>
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<td><strong>ELIGIBILITY</strong></td>
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<td>• Eligible and Ineligible Entities</td>
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Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Indian tribes, educational institutions, businesses, unincorporated individuals, international organizations.

Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies.

**Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds**

- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

**FUNDING AVAILABILITY**

The Sea Turtles Program has approximately $500,000 to award in funding for grants each year. The majority of awards under this program will fall in the range of $50,000 to $300,000. However, upper or lower limits to award size are not specified. A minimum of a 1:1 Non-Federal match of cash and/or in-kind services is required. Projects may extend from one to three years. Additional year funds are not guaranteed to be available in future years to supplement awards made as a result of this review. Selected projects may be required to submit data funded by this program to global databases and/or present their results through NFWF-sponsored forums.

**EVALUATION CRITERIA**

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

**Required Criteria:**

**Program Goals and Priorities** – Project contributes to the Program’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the Request for Proposal.

**Technical Merit** – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible.
**Budget** – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s Budget Instructions cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with OMB Uniform Guidance as applicable (OMB Uniform Guidance).

**Partnership** – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

**Additional Criteria Used in Evaluation of the Full Proposal:**

**Monitoring** – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress toward the biological and socioeconomic goals stated in the proposal (i.e. change in habitat/species population number, % behavior change, % of predation). Monitoring should occur before, during and after the proposed project activities to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

**Local Impact and Broader Transferability** – Project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy with clear steps for uptake and integration by local management authority (if applicable) and/or has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities. Preference will be given to applicants that can demonstrate how their data will contribute to the broader conservation community through regional/global/species databases if applicable.

**Communication** – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

**Long-term Sustainability** – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

**OTHER**

**General** – Applicants will be required to indicate the status of all permits required to comply with federal, state or local requirements.
**Procurement** – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not necessarily constitute NFWF’s express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

**Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support** – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

**Environmental Compliance Requirements** – Projects selected to receive Federal funding may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with such Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

**Federal Funding Requirements** – Projects selected to receive Federal funding may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. Federally-funded projects must operate in compliance with the OMB Uniform Guidance as applicable to the applicant.

**Quality Assurance** – If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation (www.epa.gov/quality/qapps.html). Applicants should budget time and resources to complete this task.

**Permits** – Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

**TIMELINE**

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the Program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information (www.nfwf.org/seaturtles).
Pre-Proposal Due Date: October 13, 2016, 11:59PM ET
Invitations for Full Proposals Sent: Week of October 31st
Full Proposal Due Date: December 1, 2016, 11:59PM ET
Review Period: January-February 2017
Awards Announced: March 2017

HOW TO APPLY
All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information.

2. Once on your homepage, click the “Apply for Funding” button and select this RFP’s Funding Opportunity from the list of options.

3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE
A PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded here.

A Tip Sheet is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded here. Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website’s “Applicant Information” page (http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx).

Applicants are encouraged to view the Pre-proposal Webinar video.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:
Michelle Pico (pico@nfwf.org)

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:
Easygrants Helpdesk
Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail: 202-595-2497
Sea Turtles Program

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.
Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.