

# WELCOME TO THE CONSERVATION PARTNERS PROGRAM – JUNE 2024 WEBINAR

## Using GoToWebinar

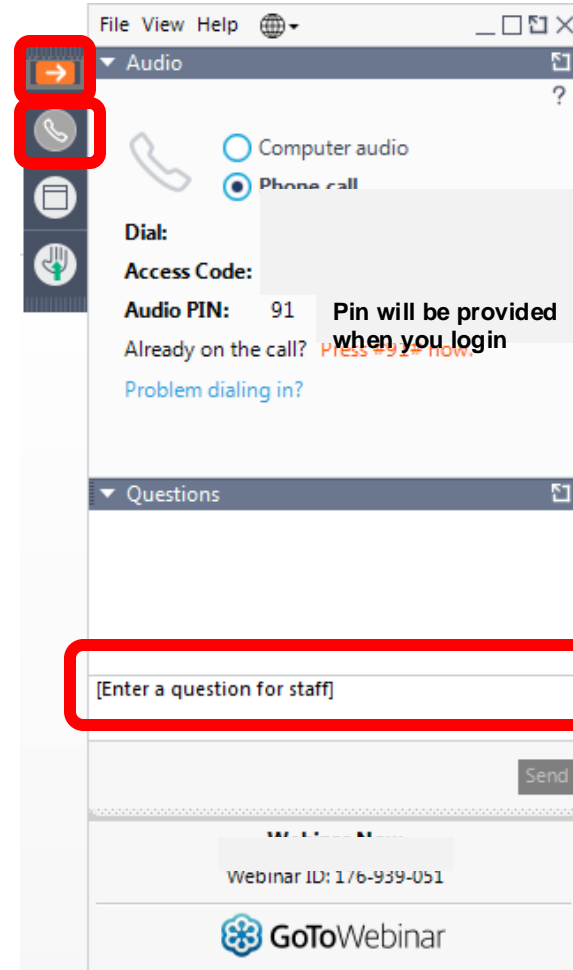
Open and close your control panel

Join audio:

- Choose **Mic & Speakers** to use VoIP
- Choose **Telephone** and dial using the information provided
- Or use Computer audio

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel

**Note:** Today's presentation is being recorded and will be provided within 48 hours.



We will get started momentarily ...

A close-up photograph of two people shaking hands in a field. The person on the left is wearing a plaid shirt, and the person on the right is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt. The background is a bright, hazy field with a warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The text is overlaid on the lower half of the image.

# Conservation Partners Program

## June 2024 Funding Opportunity

### Guidance for Applicants

Wednesday, June 26, 2024, 3:00 – 4:00 PM ET

# Webinar Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- NFWF Overview
- Conservation Partners Program Overview
- 2024 2<sup>nd</sup> Funding Opportunity
- Preparing a Proposal
- Timeline
- Q&A

**Webinar is recorded and PDF slides will be available at [www.nfwf.org/cpp](http://www.nfwf.org/cpp)**

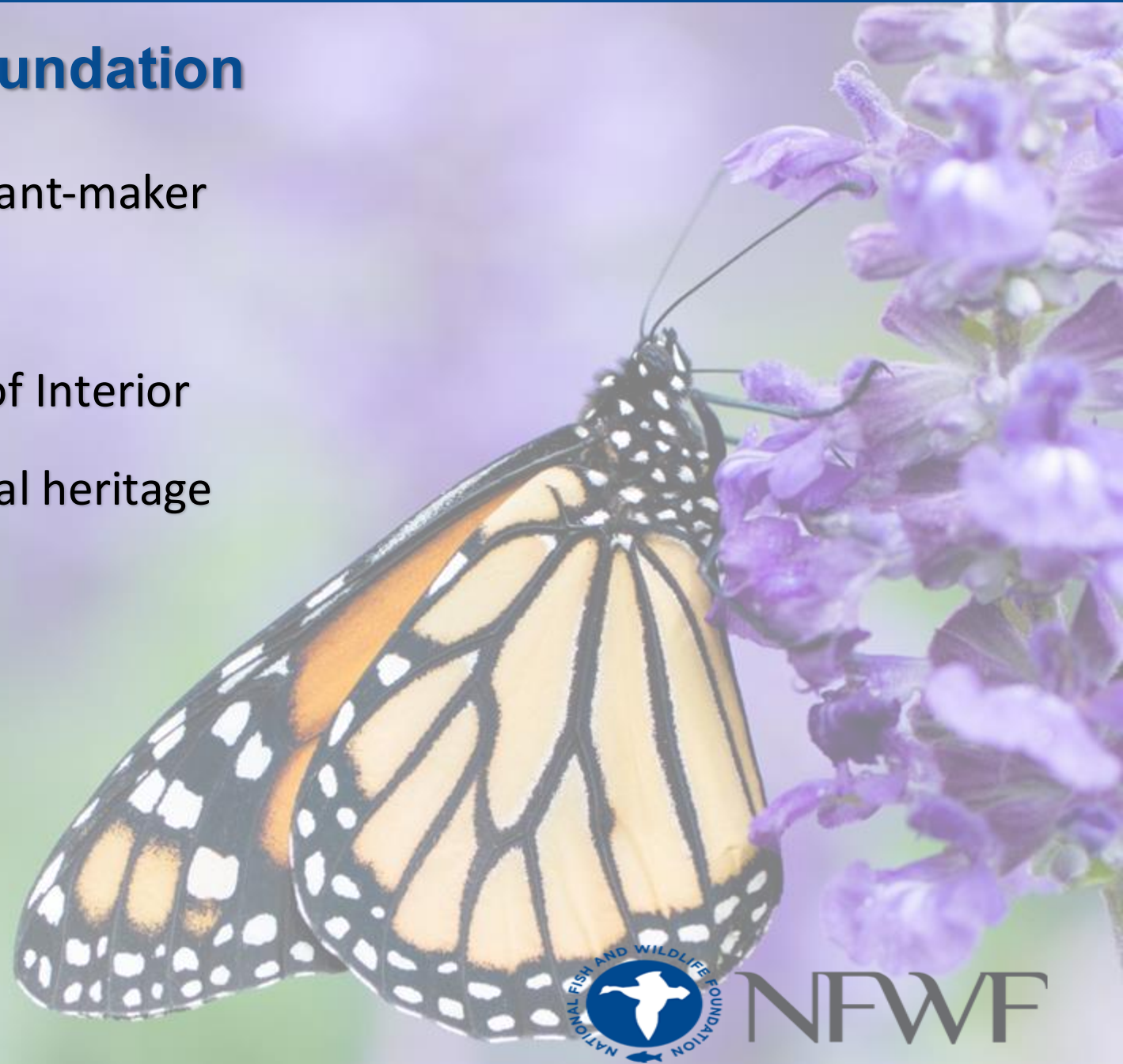


**NFWF**

# National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

- Largest U.S. private conservation grant-maker
- Chartered by U.S. Congress in 1984
- Board appointed by U.S. Secretary of Interior
- Sustain, restore, enhance our natural heritage
- Foster public–private collaboration
- More than 60 grant programs

**Over 22,000 grants to 6,000+ grantees**  
**\$10 billion in conservation impact**



**NFWF**

# Partnering Model

## Non-Federal Partners

- Corporations
- Foundations
- Private Donors
- Mitigation and Settlements
- States
- NGOs

\$



# NFWF

Convener of focused, leveraged funding and leadership for priority wildlife and habitat conservation through grant making

## Federal Partners

- Appropriations
- Cooperative Agreements

\$



Competitive Grants/Strategies



Public and Private Lands



Voluntary Practices



Environmental/Economic Benefits

# Conservation Partners Program

- Provide technical assistance to private landowners/operators to advance conservation on working lands
  - Management plans
  - Best management practices
  - Participation in Farm Bill programs
  - Knowledge-sharing
- Benefits
  - Enhance wildlife values
  - Improve water resources
  - Store and sequester carbon
  - Improve productivity and profitability
  - Engage communities



# Regenerative Agriculture Principles



- Systems-approach to farming and ranching
  1. Minimize chronic disturbances to the soil and biological community
  2. Enhance wildlife habitat
  3. Maximize crop diversity
  4. Keep the soil covered
  5. Keep a living root in the ground at all times
  6. Efficiently manage water resources
  7. Integrate livestock
- Foster peer-to-peer learning

# 2024 Funding Opportunity

- Approximately up to \$15 M available
- Typical grant awards: \$200K–1M
- Proposals due August 14, 2024
- Eligible applicants:
  - Non-profit organizations
  - State, tribal and local agencies
  - Educational institutions






## Period of Performance

- Start date should be on or after November award date
- Duration typically 3 years
- Match must be spent between project start and end dates

## NRCS Alignment

- State Conservationist awareness of project
- Align with NRCS on conservation priorities but also operational (planning, contracting, practice implementation towards Farm Bill programs etc.)
- Must be separate from other NRCS programs (e.g., RCPP, CIG)

# Matching Contributions

- Match not required, but higher match ratios may be more competitive
  - Underserved/Special Emphasis organizations encouraged to contact NFWF about any match barriers
  - Match sources
    - Cash
    - In-kind contributions of staff
    - Materials and services donated
    - Volunteer time
    - Cost of land acquisition/easement
    - Allowable indirect costs not covered by grant funding
    - Other tangible contributions to project goals
  - Landowner cost-share used to enroll in Farm Bill programs (e.g., EQIP) is **not eligible**
- 

# 2024 Funding Priorities

- Successful projects will:
  - Drive practice change and support conservation planning at a landscape scale
  - Support and complement NRCS capacity
- Key strategies
  - Crop management
  - Grazing management
  - Irrigation improvement
  - Habitat enhancement
- Geographic focus
  - **Great Plains**
  - Upper Mississippi River Basin
  - Great Lakes Basin
  - **Western Grazing Lands**

# Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Practices

- TA delivered through funded projects should help promote, design, and implement to the adoption of Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) Practices
  - Practices determined by NRCS to deliver quantifiable reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and/or increases in carbon sequestration.
- Soil health, nitrogen management, livestock and grazing management, forestry and wildlife habitat, wetland restoration categories



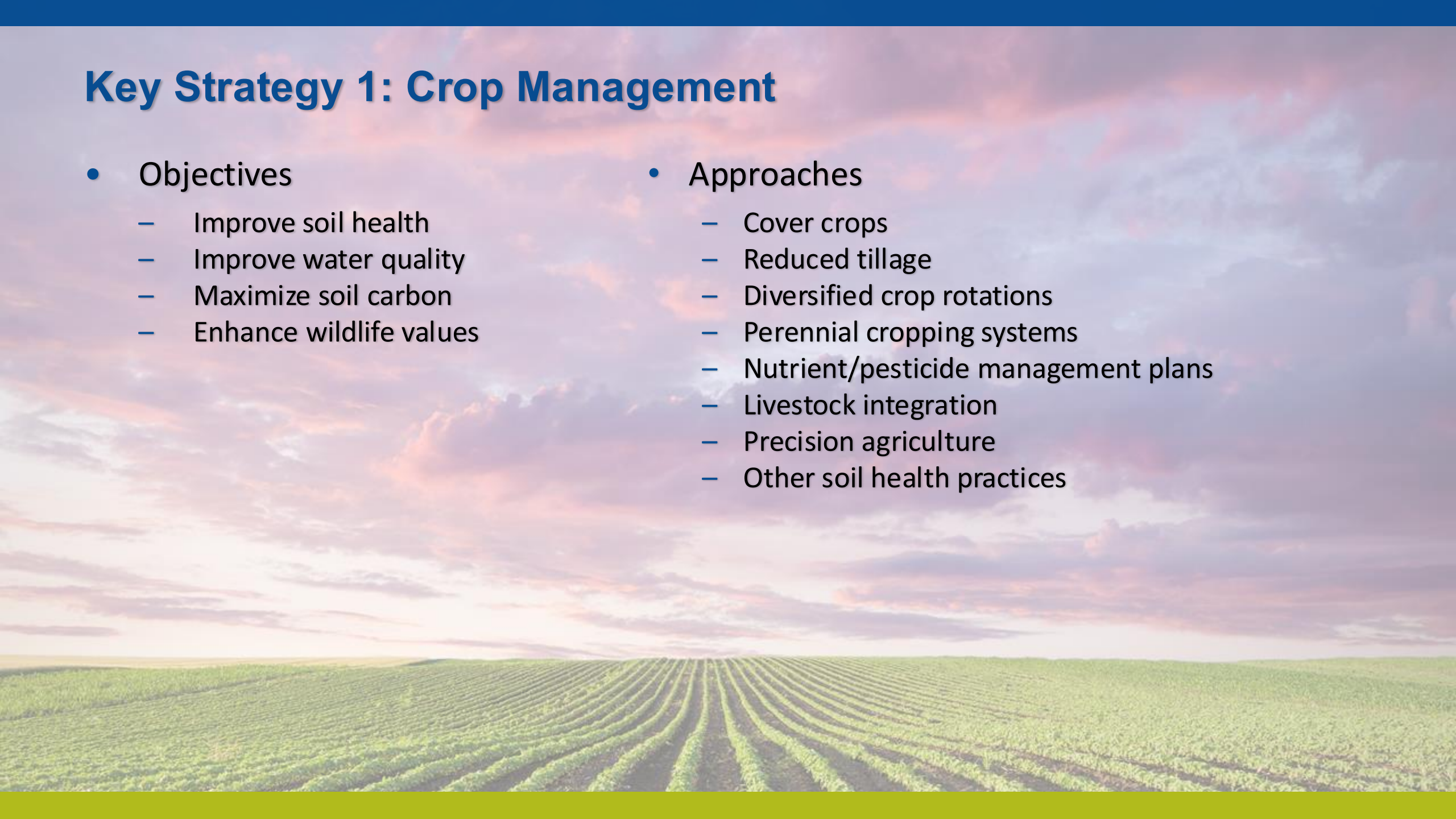
# Key Strategy 1: Crop Management

- Objectives

- Improve soil health
- Improve water quality
- Maximize soil carbon
- Enhance wildlife values

- Approaches

- Cover crops
- Reduced tillage
- Diversified crop rotations
- Perennial cropping systems
- Nutrient/pesticide management plans
- Livestock integration
- Precision agriculture
- Other soil health practices



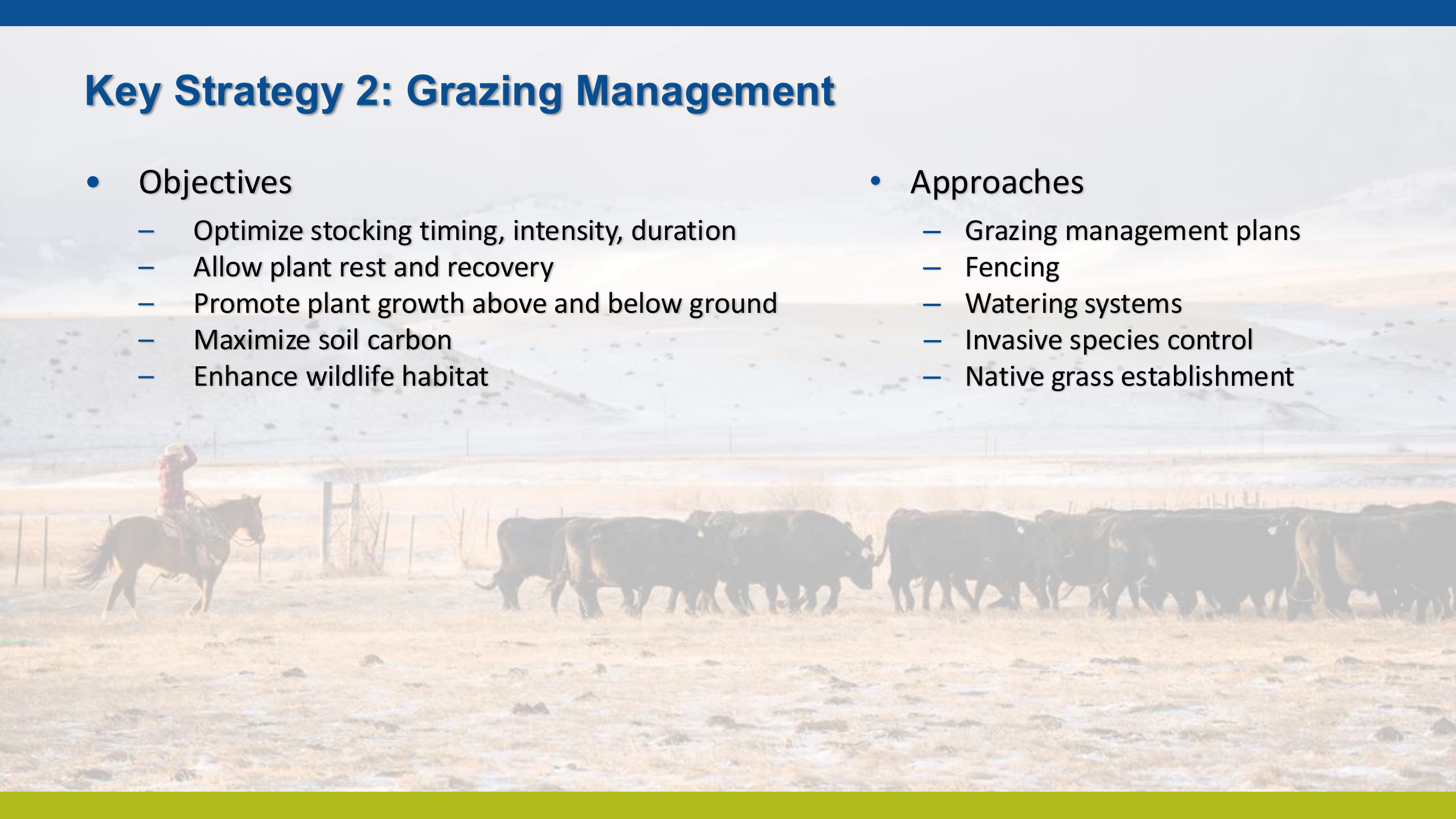
# Key Strategy 2: Grazing Management

- Objectives

- Optimize stocking timing, intensity, duration
- Allow plant rest and recovery
- Promote plant growth above and below ground
- Maximize soil carbon
- Enhance wildlife habitat

- Approaches

- Grazing management plans
- Fencing
- Watering systems
- Invasive species control
- Native grass establishment



# Key Strategy 3: Irrigation Improvement

- Objectives

- Promote water conservation, aquifer recharge
- Improve hydrology, in-stream flows
- Improve flood/drought resilience

- Approaches

- Irrigation systems
- Irrigation timing
- Other water-conservation practices

# Key Strategy 4: Habitat Enhancement

- Objectives

- Working grasslands
- Field buffers
- Forests
- Wetlands
- Riparian zones
- Floodplains
- Other adjacent areas

- Approaches

- Native plantings
- Invasive species control
- Mowing
- Prescribed burning
- Fencing
- Other conservation practices



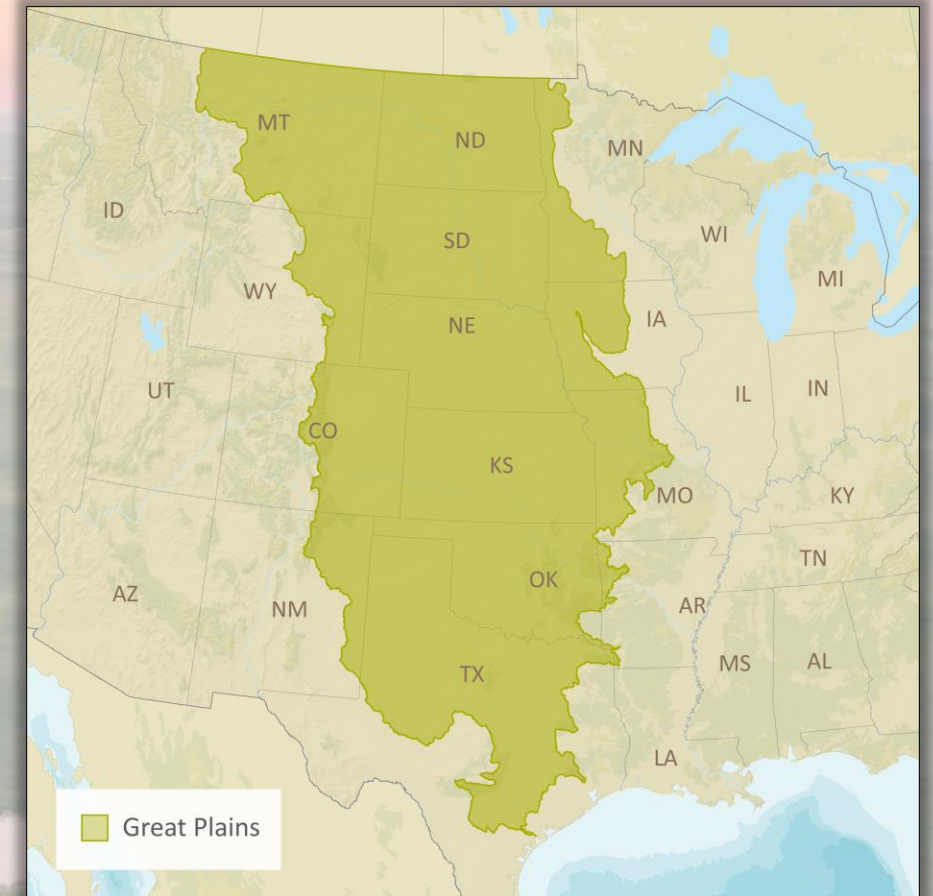


# Great Plains

- Geography
  - Historic tallgrass, mixed grass and shortgrass prairie
  - Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wyoming
- Strategies
  - Crop management
  - Grazing management
  - Habitat enhancement

## Crop management emphasis:

Lands in active wheat rotation, particularly in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado

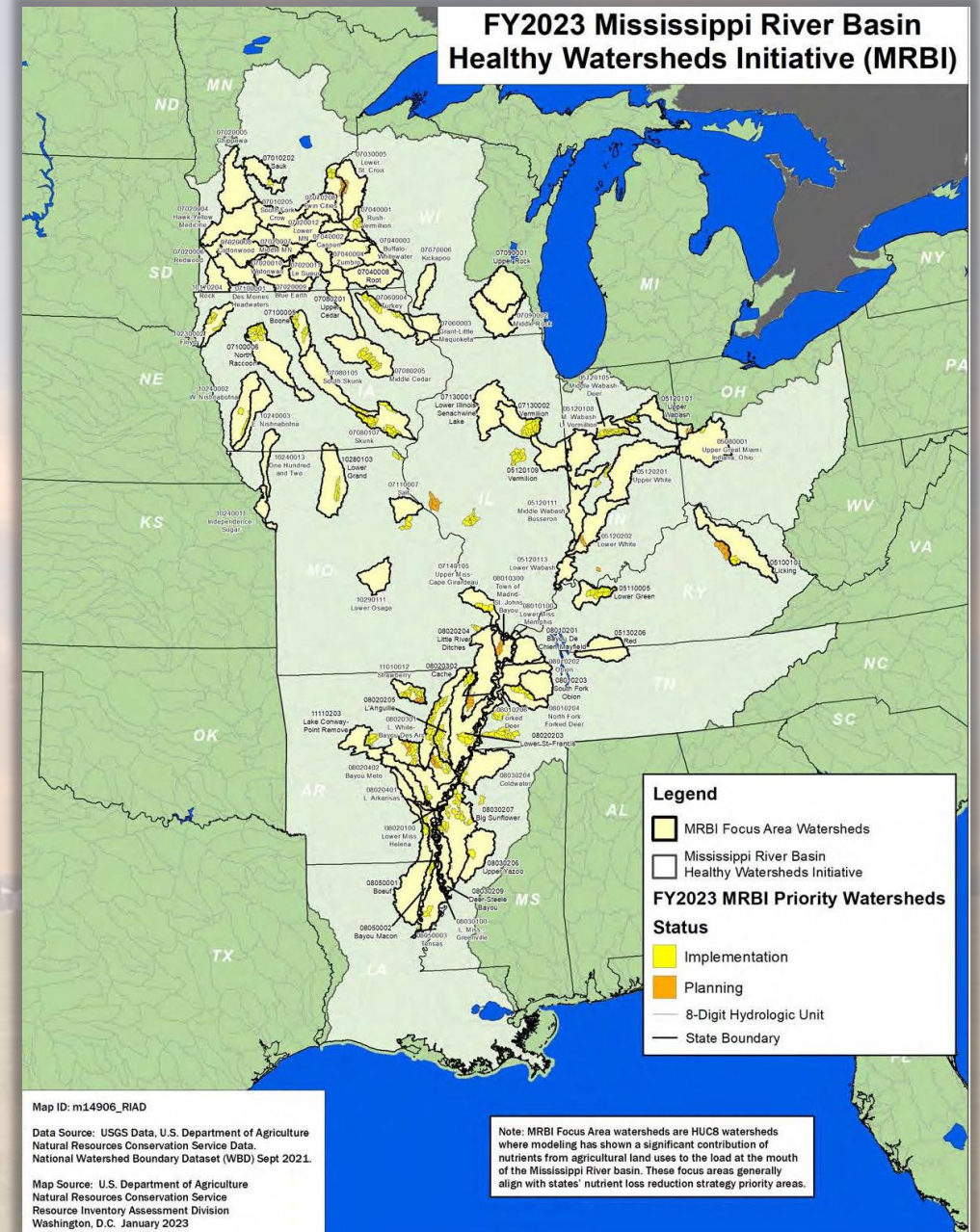


# Upper Mississippi River Basin

- Geography
  - Mississippi River Basin upstream from the confluence with the Ohio River
  - Priority in NRCS MRBI Focus Area Watersheds
- Strategies
  - Crop management
  - Grazing management
  - Habitat enhancement

## Crop management emphasis:

Lands in active corn rotation in Ohio



# Great Lakes Basin

- Geography
  - U.S. portion of Great Lakes Basin
- Strategies
  - Crop management
  - Grazing management
  - Habitat enhancement



## Emphasis:

- Dairies: MI Lower Peninsula, IN Lake Michigan watershed, western Lake Erie watershed
- Lands in active corn rotation in Ohio

# Western Grazing Lands

- Geography
  - Grasslands, shrublands, and pasturelands in the Western United States
- Strategies
  - Grazing management
  - Habitat enhancement

## Grazing/habitat emphasis:

- conserving and restoring intact grazing landscapes
- reducing the expansion of conifers and exotic annual grasses
- restoring wet meadows and other mesic areas
- increasing drought resilience of farm operations
- support delivery of NRCS initiatives



# Metrics

- Select only the most relevant metrics (but several metrics are required)
- Starting Values should be set to 0
- **Pay careful attention to metrics instructions in the RFP and provide metrics notes and proposal narrative as directed:**
  - Habitat restoration metrics capture both establishment and enhancement of habitat; specify in notes landcover type before and after restoration
  - Habitat management and restoration metrics should correspond to NRCS Conservation Practice Standards
  - Capacity metrics request information on Historically Underserved or Special Emphasis categories (both producer outreach and staff hired). Provide estimates of people to be engaged in notes.

# Metrics – Required Metrics

- Several metrics are required for all applicants (**new metrics in bold**):
  1. # jobs created AND/OR # jobs sustained
  2. # participants receiving gov't agency cost share or financial assistance
  3. Dollar value of government agency cost share or financial assistance
  4. Acres covered by government agency cost share or financial assistance
  - 5. # people with changed behavior (to report # of farmers changing practices)**
  6. Acreage of project footprint
  7. # of mgmt plans with BMPs
  - 8. # of acres with conservation plans**



# NRCS Underserved and Special Emphasis Categories

## Historically Underserved categories

- Those with limited resources
- Beginning farmers/ranchers
- Socially disadvantaged (American Indian, Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, Hispanic)
- Veterans

## Special Emphasis categories

- Native American/Alaska Native, Asian American, Black, Disabled, Women, LGBTQ, Hispanic, Veteran

# Application Assistance – Easygrants Tips

- If you've never used Easygrants (<https://easygrants.nfwf.org/>) before, create your login TODAY and familiarize yourself with the system.
- Turn off your browser's pop-up blockers.
- Download the “Tip Sheet” (available on the RFP webpage) and use it as a reference to complete each field of the proposal.
- Refer to the RFP and metrics instructions in Easygrants for required metric notes.
- DO NOT mail physical letters of support to NFWF, they must be digital copies uploaded into the online proposal.
- Provide a phone number in your Easygrants account. Keep your email and proposal contact information up-to-date.



# Full Proposal Narrative – Community Impact

Describe the community(ies) where the project will take place, who will benefit from the project, and how they were or will be engaged in project development and implementation. Provide demographic information on the community(ies), including but not limited to age, race and ethnicity, poverty rates. When possible, submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

## Two-part question:

- 1) Describe community characteristics of the project area and identify any communities impacted.
  - Use demographic data to document (poverty statistics, school lunch data, demographic records)
  - This data can be found using Census data, School District data, State data centers, EJ Screen, and other sources
- 2) Describe outreach and community engagement activities for project development and implementation

Letters of support welcome but not required

# Full Proposal Uploads - Applicant Demographic Information Form

- The information you provide will not be shared with proposal reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions.
- The Foundation will not share identifying information about any particular entity or project.
- While the form is a required upload, applicants can opt out of providing the information within the form itself
  - If your organization does not collect this information or if you have provided NFWF with this information in the last 12 months, you can opt out.
- The information provided on this excel form will be kept confidential, the Foundation may share its anonymized aggregate findings as appropriate with its staff, Board of Directors, funding partners, and publicly on its website or through other media.

## APPLICANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

As part of NFWF's goal to encourage and support diversity across the conservation projects we fund, we would like to better understand the existing diversity in our grantmaking community and in the local communities. To accomplish this task, we are asking organizations that we fund to assist us by providing basic information about their workforce demographics on this form.

As part of this effort to support diversity, we also desire to understand how our grantees engage with the communities where the projects take place and who in those communities might benefit from them. We ask for this information provided on this excel form will be kept confidential, although the Foundation may share its aggregate findings as appropriate with its staff, Board of Directors, funding partners, and publicly on its website. not share identifying information about any particular entity or project. These anonymized aggregate data will be used by NFWF to better understand the demographic profiles of the organizations that we fund.

The information you provide will not be shared with proposal reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions.

**Instructions:** Complete all pertinent fields shaded in green. Your Human Resources Department may have some of the information requested readily available. Please be sure to complete the General Information section if you do not know an answer, use the "don't know/not sure" option instead of guessing. If a section does not apply to your organization you may skip it. Do not make any other changes to this form. You may opt out of providing this information to NFWF; however, you still must upload this form to Easygrants with your application and complete the first section of the form.

**All applicants must complete this section, even if you have provided this data to NFWF in the past 12 months or are opting out for another reason.**

If you have provided this data to NFWF in the past 12 months you do not need to provide it again but you must still complete this top section of the form and submit it with your proposal.

Easygrants project # from your grant application:

Grant program name shown on the RFP:

If you are opting out, select a reason from the dropdown list in the green box:

## General Information

Date Completed:

Project Title:

Organization Full Name:

Organization EIN:

Organization Type:

Organization Size (number of employees)

Click on the green box to select from the dropdown list

Click on the green box to select from the dropdown list

## PART 1: APPLICANT ORGANIZATION - ALL EMPLOYEES (if applicable)

Please provide the following demographic information about all of your organization's employees, including senior leaders.

1. How many people currently work for your organization? (Include temporary and part-time employees in your response but do not include contractors)

Total Number:

2. How many of your employees identify as each gender?

Female:

Male:

Non-binary:

Unknown/Not sure:



# Full Proposal – Map Section



- Home
- Main
- Contact Information
- Organization Information
- Project Information
- Project Location
- Map
- Uploads
- Metrics
- Budget
- Matching Contributions
- Permits and Approvals
- Review and Submit
- FAQ
- Help
- Log Out

## Instructions

Leaving this Map page before completing all of the steps below will result in a loss of your unsaved map data. If you take longer than one hour to complete the steps below, Easygrants will time out and you will lose your unsaved map data. You may click Save before you are done to reset the Easygrants clock, but you must first Submit your locations so that they appear GREEN (submitted). Clicking Save when there are ORANGE (pending) locations will result in loss of those orange polygons. You may return to this Map page at any time to add to (or delete) the mapping work that you save.

### Overview of Steps to Create and Submit Your Project Location Map

Click Help (on the left) to see detailed instructions for all of the steps below as well as a glossary of mapping terms used in this mapping tool. If using this tool for the first time, please read through the Help guide and familiarize yourself with the mapping tool features and terminology before entering your mapping data.

1. Begin by clicking Save at the bottom of this Map page to set the Easygrants one hour clock ticking. If you skip this step, the system may timeout sooner than expected and you may lose unsaved map data.  
**Important: Once you start creating a map, to avoid losing map data, complete all the steps below, in succession, before clicking Save or Save and Continue (Step 5).**
2. Next, map your Project Location(s) using one of the three options provided in the mapping tool below. Detailed instructions for each are contained in the Help document.
  - a. Upload an existing shapefile (see Shapefile requirements below) by clicking on the Upload Shapefile feature bar (this option is open by default when you start using the mapping tool); or
  - b. Select one or more geographic features (e.g. county, lake, national park) for your project by clicking the Select by Geography feature bar; or
  - c. Create a custom area to depict your project location(s) by clicking on the Draw a Custom Area feature bar.
3. Finalize the creation of your map by clicking Submit Project Location.  
**All spatial locations MUST appear in GREEN to indicate that those project locations have been submitted.**
4. To confirm your map, click the Confirmation Check Box at the bottom of the page.
5. Finally, click Save to save your map and stay on this page, or Save & Continue to save your map and move to the next page in this task.  
**All GREEN locations will be saved and any ORANGE locations will be discarded.**

Map your project at the finest scale by any of the three options:

#### Upload Shapefile

- Select a Zip file(.zip) containing a shapefile(.shp,.dbf,.prj) from your local file system.
- The shapefile must be of POLYGON geometry type.
- The shapefile must not exceed 1 MB.

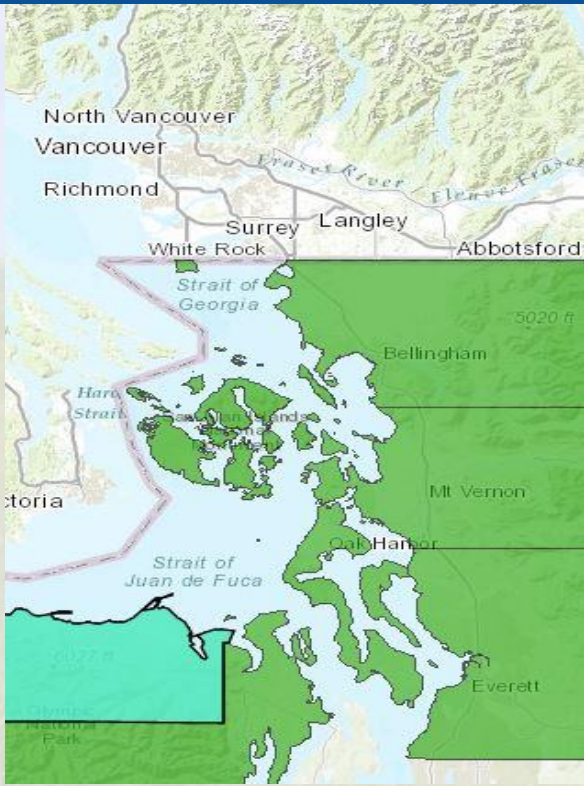
Choose File No file chosen

Select By Geography

Draw a Custom Area

My project area:

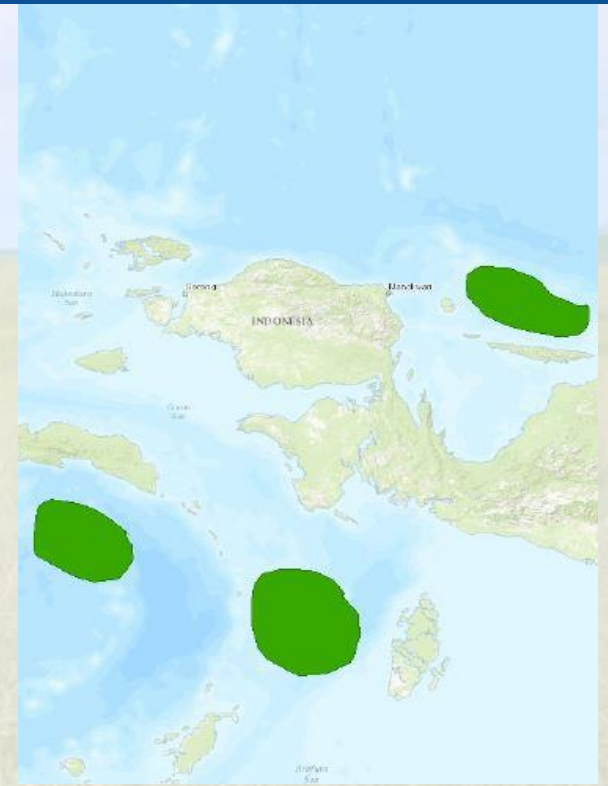




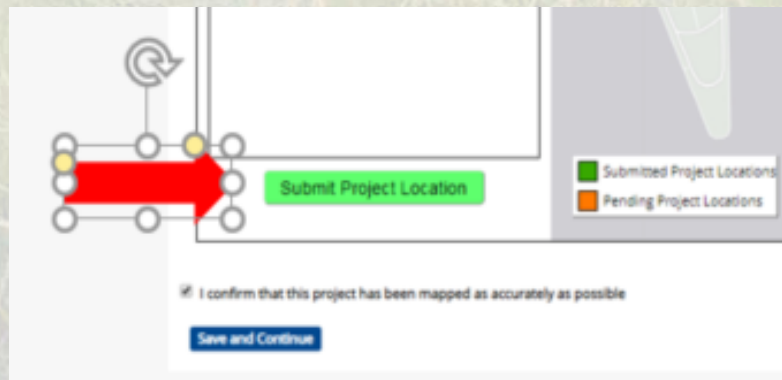
1. Upload Shapefile



2. Select by Geography



3. Draw a Custom Area



# Application Assistance – Reference Sheet

## Supporting Documents:

1. Conservation Partners June 2024 RFP webpage
  - a. Tip Sheet
    - Step-by-step Full Proposal guidance
  
2. NFWF Application Information
  - a. Budget instructions
    - Download the Detailed Budget and Narrative Guide
    - \*For the Budget section, please provide a respective budget narrative describing the purpose of each line item towards the project.
  - b. Required financial documents
    - Financial documents must be for the same fiscal year and **no more than 2 years old**
  - c. Indirect Cost Policy

## Timeline

Full Proposal Due Date: **Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 PM ET**

Awards Announced: Late November-December 2024



NFWF

# Contacts

## Programmatic Questions:

### **Greg Pilchak**

Program Director, Working Lands

Phone: 202-938-0640

Email: [Greg.Pilchak@nfwf.org](mailto:Greg.Pilchak@nfwf.org)

### **Minna Wong**

Program Manager, Working Lands

Phone: 202-595-2657

Email: [Minna.Wong@nfwf.org](mailto:Minna.Wong@nfwf.org)

## Application/Easygrants Questions:

### **Ernest Newborn**

Coordinator, Regional Programs

Phone: 202-595-2444

Email: [Ernest.Newborn@nfwf.org](mailto:Ernest.Newborn@nfwf.org)

## Technical Assistance/Easygrants Helpdesk:

Email: [Easygrants@nfwf.org](mailto:Easygrants@nfwf.org)

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

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.



Questions?



NFWF