



NFWF



Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund

2025 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Tuesday, May 13, 2025, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) are committed to operating in full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. We continuously monitor legal and regulatory developments to ensure our policies, procedures, and operations align with current federal directives. We encourage all applicants to do the same.

The ability and extent to which NFWF is able to make awards is contingent upon receipt of funds from federal agencies and/or other funding partners. Final funding decisions will be made based on the applications received and the level and timing of funding received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the [Delaware River Program page](#) of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

DWCF Proposal Labs (Register)	January 28 through May 8, 2025
DWCF Applicant Webinar Posting	Wednesday, April 2, 2025
Proposal Tools Webinar Posting	Wednesday, April 9, 2025
Full Proposal Due Date	Tuesday, May 13, 2025, 11:59pm, ET
Review Period	May - June 2025
Awards Announced	Mid-August 2025

A recorded webinar detailing this Request for Proposals and answering frequently asked questions will be available on the Delaware River [program page](#) by Wednesday, April 2, 2025. While NFWF does not require consultation prior to application, we strongly encourage interested applicants to schedule a [virtual proposal lab](#) to discuss their proposed project to gather constructive feedback in developing a competitive proposal.

OVERVIEW

The NFWF, in partnership with the FWS, is soliciting proposals through the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF) to conserve, restore, and connect people with fish and wildlife habitat in the Delaware River watershed. The DWCF will award grants of \$75,000 to \$2,000,000 each to conserve, restore, and protect habitats on public and private land, across rural, urban, and Tribal areas, that contribute to the overall health of the Delaware River watershed—as well as benefit the quality of life and economic vitality of the communities in the Delaware River watershed. Major



funding for the DWCF is provided by the FWS with additional funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

In 2025, NFWF will award DWCF grants in four grant categories, including: Implementation Grants; Planning Grants; Capacity Building Grants; and Research, Monitoring & Evaluation Grants. These grants will be awarded to non-profit organizations; federal, state, interstate and local governments; Tribal governments and organizations; and educational institutions to implement voluntary, on-the-ground restoration, conservation, and community engagement projects that achieve the goals of the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program Framework to:

1. Sustain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat;
2. Improve and maintain water quality for fish, wildlife, and people;
3. Sustain and enhance water management to benefit fish and wildlife; and
4. Improve outdoor recreational opportunities.

To address these goals, projects may be located anywhere within the Delaware River watershed and must align with one or more of the Strategic Program Areas described in the Program Priorities section below. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to reference NFWF's Delaware River Watershed Business Plan and link NFWF Business Plan strategies and work in focal areas for priority species with Framework Strategic Program Areas whenever possible. DWCF seeks to support projects that increase recreational access and community engagement with the goal of providing opportunities for all to experience the benefits of a healthy Delaware River watershed.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Projects must be implemented entirely within the Delaware River watershed, which includes portions of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and a small portion of Maryland. Organizations located outside the watershed may apply if the project is conducted entirely within the watershed.

Applicants should consult NFWF's online mapping portal to determine appropriate geographic focus areas for their proposed project activities and alignment with NFWF's Delaware Business Plan and FWS priorities.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must clearly address how projects will directly and measurably contribute to the accomplishment of program priorities enumerated below. Priority will be given to projects that collaboratively address one or more of the following Strategic Program Areas.

Strategic Program Area 1: Sustain and Enhance Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration and

Conservation Activities. The basin has diverse habitats that support an array of fish and wildlife, ranging from the densely forested headwater streams in the upper basin, past the highly urbanized waterfronts, to the bay shores of the estuary. The program will support projects that enhance ecological function and conserve and restore important habitats upon which fish and wildlife resources in the basin depend. Activities addressing this strategic program area include but are not limited to:

- Projects that conserve, restore, and establish the ecological function of important habitats upon which the fish and wildlife (including migratory species) in the basin depend— upland forests, wetlands, coastal marshes, riparian buffers, etc.
- Projects benefitting state designated Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs), Regional SGCNs by the Northeast Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Endangered Species (ESA)-listed species, and at-risk species (see Related Content section for additional guidance on priority species conservation).
- Projects that benefit fish and wildlife species within the five focal areas outlined in NFWF’s Delaware River Watershed [Business Plan](#).
- Program funding will be set aside for projects that direct staff resources to help agricultural producers design and implement conservation practices benefitting select Working Lands for Wildlife target species, American Black Duck and Golden-winged Warbler, within the watershed. Projects should increase Farm Bill program participation and conservation practice implementation among agricultural producers. See the NRCS section below for more information.
- Conservation and restoration planning projects working with landowners to establish conservation easements on lands supporting high-value fish and wildlife habitats.
- Conservation and restoration planning projects that result in shovel-ready projects that improve habitats, restore aquatic connectivity, reduce runoff, etc.
- Projects increasing the delivery of best management practices and increasing fish and wildlife habitat on/adjacent to farmlands such as riparian buffer establishment, stream crossings, wetland restoration, and floodplain reconnection.

NEW in 2025: Call for Forest Management Projects in New Jersey

NFWF is seeking DWCF projects that provide outreach and technical assistance to private landowners and develop conservation plans focused on voluntary conservation activities, including but not limited to activities to improve and protect soil health, water quality and quantity outcomes, improve carbon sequestration, and improve wildlife habitats in the New Jersey portion of the Delaware River watershed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals with projects utilizing robust riparian buffer plantings, reforestation and afforestation, and other forest management practices for improved habitat and water quality. Applicants should reach out to Erin Lewis (Erin.Lewis@nfwf.org) for questions.



- Projects that remove barriers to aquatic organism passage to restore aquatic connectivity and improve public safety across the basin.
- Projects that reduce hazards for priority at-risk forest birds during migration, including projects that result in retrofitting of windows, lighting, and towers to reduce at-risk bird collisions.
- Projects stabilizing streambanks and reconnecting floodplains to improve ecological function, reestablish native plant communities, and support aquatic organisms.
- Projects that build capacity for Tribal stewardship and management of fish and wildlife habitats on and adjacent to Tribal homelands.

Strategic Program Area 2: Improve and Maintain Water Quality to Support Fish and Wildlife, as well as Habitats for Fish and Wildlife and Drinking Water for People. Over 14 million people rely on the water from the Delaware River and its tributaries for their drinking water needs. The river also supports a diverse suite of fish and wildlife that depend on high-quality water. While projects should coordinate with existing regulatory activities, they must focus on non-regulatory efforts. Priority will be given to projects focusing on habitat protection and conservation activities with the objective of protecting water quality for both drinking water and the health of the fish and wildlife resources. Activities addressing this strategic program area include but are not limited to:

- Instream restoration and streambank stabilization projects to enhance habitat, increase nutrient processing, reduce erosion and sedimentation, and increase public access.
- Projects that install rain gardens and pollinator habitat, living shorelines, buffers along agricultural fields, etc. to filter stormwater and improve water quality for fish and wildlife.
- Projects that reconnect stream channels to historic floodplains and adjacent wetlands to promote nutrient removal and reduce erosion.
- Planning projects that result in shovel-ready designs for living shorelines, bioswales, and other designs that will improve water quality, mitigate pollution, and provide valuable habitats for fish and wildlife.
- Voluntary on-farm practices that enhance fish and wildlife habitats on working lands such as riparian buffers, instream enhancements, or wetland restoration.
- Water quality monitoring programs and outreach campaigns to promote clean water for fish and wildlife and empower local community scientists across rural, urban, and Tribal areas within the watershed.
- Nature-based stormwater solutions and agriculture projects that are strategic and primarily benefit fish and wildlife habitat.

Strategic Program Area 3: Sustain and Enhance Water Resource Management for Volume and Flood Damage Mitigation Improvements to Benefit Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Municipal and industrial water supply, energy production, and agricultural uses place high demands on water resources in the Delaware River Basin. Fish and wildlife also depend on water availability in their habitats. Projects should strive to manage water uses and enhance natural disaster tolerances for

people as well as for fish and wildlife while adapting to changing landscape conditions. While projects should focus on non-regulatory efforts to support demands on water resources of the basin, projects should coordinate with existing regulatory activities. Activities addressing this strategic program area include but are not limited to:

- Projects that restore or expand natural features such as coastal marshes and wetlands, dune and beach systems, oyster reefs, forests, stream channels, floodplains, and buffers which minimize the impacts of storms and other naturally occurring events on nearby communities and maximize benefits to fish and wildlife.
- Projects that reconnect stream channels to historic floodplains and adjacent wetlands to enhance habitats and reduce the risk of flooding, particularly to vulnerable communities.
- Rain garden, native pollinator garden, and bioswale installation or planning projects that redirect and filter stormwater runoff and reduce flooding.
- Planning or construction projects that establish or enhance living shorelines and other natural habitats to mitigate flooding and improve habitats for fish and wildlife.
- Projects that replace or right-size culverts or otherwise improve road and stream crossings to reduce downstream erosion of nutrients and minimize flooding.
- Projects benefiting rural, urban, and Tribal communities by reducing nuisance flooding, decreasing stormwater runoff, and increasing resiliency.
- Nature-based stormwater solutions and agriculture projects that primarily benefit fish and wildlife habitat.

Strategic Program Area 4: Improve Opportunities for Public Access and Recreation in the Basin Consistent with the Ecological Needs of Fish and Wildlife Habitat. Because of its location within a densely populated part of the country, the basin offers ample outdoor recreation opportunities to millions of people. The program will support projects that enable the recreational endeavors of communities through traditional and non-traditional outdoor experiences. Projects may include community gardens, pollinator habitats, nature trails, kayaking, improved boating access and hunting and fishing opportunities, as well as wildlife viewing and birding, thus providing increased public access and economic benefits to the watershed. The program may also support projects which address the increasing pressures of public access on our fish, wildlife, and other natural resources. Activities addressing this strategic program area include but are not limited to:

- Upgrades to public access points like boat and kayak launches, walking trails, hunting and fishing access, birding boardwalks, etc. to withstand increasing use, improve deficient infrastructure, increase public safety, and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.
- Projects that establish trail networks and infrastructure for other recreational activities, incorporating educational signage to increase public awareness.
- Innovative projects establishing public access and education for communities, such as pollinator and native species gardens and community-based habitat improvement projects, to increase access to nature and its benefits.

- Projects incorporating youth engagement programming, benefitting fish and wildlife, and fostering stewardship among participants.
- Projects benefitting local communities, Tribes, as well as fish and wildlife resources, through educational programming or direct community engagement that can deliver improved access to green and blue spaces for communities.
- Projects incorporating volunteer opportunities or leading to job creation.

Direct Community Engagement

DWCF seeks to support projects that increase direct community engagement with the goal of providing opportunities for residents to experience the benefits of a healthy Delaware River watershed.

The DWCF will prioritize proposals that directly and meaningfully engage communities throughout project development and implementation. Successful proposals will satisfy the evaluation criteria outlined in the “Partnership and Community Impact” section on page 9. Some examples of direct and meaningful community engagement include:

- Projects are community led or co-created with community members
- Project team includes members representing and/or a part of the community
- Empowering community members with knowledge or decision-making authority
- Active engagement strategies such as workshops, classroom activities, field trips and volunteer opportunities
- Creating jobs in the target community, performing job training, technical assistance and certifications

Priority will be given to projects that were developed through community input and co-design processes.

GRANT AWARD INFORMATION

The DWCF will award grants ranging from \$75,000 to no more than \$2,000,000 in 2025. Funding decisions will be made based on the level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF. The requested amount should align with the scope and scale of the project. To address these program priorities, applicants may apply to one of the four funding categories outlined below. Applicants may not submit the same project to multiple funding categories (e.g., an applicant cannot use the same project or components of the project to apply concurrently for a Planning Grant and an Implementation Grant). All proposals must:

1. Address one or more Delaware River Basin Restoration Program [Framework](#) Strategic Program Areas (listed above).
2. Incorporate one or more *Cross-Program Activities* outlined in the Framework.

The ratio of matching contributions offered by an applicant compared to grant funding requested is one criterion considered during the review process. All factors being equal, projects that offer a higher match ratio with contributions from non-federal sources will be more competitive. Voluntary additional match, beyond the minimum requirements specific to each grant category and detailed



below, may be from either federal or non-federal sources. Match leniency may be available to projects that advance key priorities but cannot meet the minimum match requirement. Should an applicant experience significant challenges meeting the non-federal requirement, they are encouraged to contact NFWF program staff to discuss options. To provide match flexibility, NFWF and FWS will allow applicants to utilize non-federal match generated from January 1, 2024 through present. Match must be spent between January 1, 2024, and the proposed project end date, non-Federal in origin and complementary to the proposed work.

Up to one million dollars will be made available for proposals that support management, research, monitoring, and/or outreach activities that have direct conservation benefits or meet other priority needs of ESA-listed species, at-risk species, or NFWF Business Plan species (see the [DWCF Priority Species](#) document for a list of species and additional guidance on priority species conservation).

DWCF Implementation Grants – Approximately 55% of the funding is available for shovel-ready conservation and restoration projects that result in quantifiable benefits for fish, wildlife, and people within the Delaware River watershed. Implementation grants will range from \$75,000 to \$2,000,000 each. These grants require non-federal matching contributions equal to the NFWF grant request (i.e., 1:1 match ratio). Capital investment projects, including the purchase or construction of large assets or infrastructure, are discouraged within this program. However, if such investments will enhance public accessibility to resources, opportunities for education and engagement, etc. applicants are encouraged to reach out to NFWF to discuss. **In 2025, applicants requesting \$1,000,000 or more in funding are required to meet with the DWCF team before submitting an application via a [virtual proposal lab](#).** Proposals will also be subject to additional scrutiny, including considerations of past and current performance and timely completion of federal compliance. Projects must be ready to begin within six months of the grant award and be completed within a three-year period of performance.

DWCF Planning Grants – Approximately 15% of the funding is available for proposals with the purpose of planning conservation and restoration projects. Planning grants could range from \$75,000 to \$500,000 each. Applicants may propose a range of project types including: 1) engagement, planning and prioritization; 2) feasibility, suitability, or alternatives analyses; 3) site assessment and conceptual design; and 4) final design and permits. These funds may be used to set the stage for projects that can compete for larger, nationally competitive funding sources and/or have watershed-wide impacts. These grants require non-federal matching contributions equal to the NFWF grant request (i.e., 1:1 match ratio). Projects must begin within six months of the grant award and be completed within a three-year period of performance.

DWCF Capacity Building Grants – Approximately 15% of the funding is available for projects aimed at building capacity within the Delaware River watershed, strengthening the ability of local communities, organizations, and partners to collaboratively enhance fish and wildlife habitat and improve access to nature. Capacity-Building Grants may range from \$75,000 to \$500,000 each. The DWCF will fund both individual organizations and local/regional collaboratives to establish and enhance local networks to accomplish shared goals; support strategic planning and project development; improve direct community engagement; advance Tribal co-stewardship initiatives;



and undertake programmatic evaluations, assessments and monitoring. NFWF encourages applicants to work in partnership with other organizations interested in similar capacity-building efforts (e.g., “cohorts”) to submit proposals that will increase efficiency, have broader reach, and allow for increased knowledge transfer. Projects must result in improved delivery of conservation and applicants are strongly encouraged to sign up for a proposal lab to discuss with NFWF and FWS program staff before submitting an application for this category.

Note: If the proposed budget includes increased staffing, the budget narrative must outline a clear plan for sustaining staff without relying on DWCF grants in the future. Additionally, the applicant must clearly articulate the conservation benefits that additional staffing will yield.

These grants require non-federal matching contributions valued at 25% of the NFWF grant request. (For example, the required non-federal match for a \$100,000 request to NFWF would be \$25,000.) Projects must be ready to begin within six months of the grant award and be completed within a three-year period of performance.

DWCF Research, Monitoring, & Evaluation Grants – Approximately 15% of the funding is available to support high-performing science that advances or enhances the efficiency of conservation delivery in the Delaware River watershed. Research, Monitoring, & Evaluation Grants may range from \$75,000 to \$500,000 each. Projects should have significant potential to transform the Delaware River watershed's future in areas including conservation and restoration action, Tribal co-stewardship, monitoring, research, evaluation, and public access. NFWF will prioritize projects that address cross-cutting issues that are barriers to, or represent unique opportunities for, accelerating habitat improvement for fish, wildlife, and people in the Delaware River watershed. For example, grants may support innovative methods and new technologies to drive down implementation costs, ensure the effectiveness and continual improvement of conservation and restoration practices, invest in sustainable monitoring infrastructure or practices, support the refinement and application of data on ESA-listed species, at-risk species, or NFWF Business Plan species that call the watershed home, and enhance direct community engagement across rural, urban, and Tribal areas and increase nature-based experiences. These grants require non-federal matching contributions equal to the NFWF grant request (i.e., 1:1 match ratio). Projects must be ready to begin within six months of the grant award and be completed within a three-year period of performance.

PROJECT METRICS

To assess project progress and ensure greater consistency of data provided by multiple grants, the Delaware River Program provides a list of metrics in Easygrants (also found in [Appendix A](#)). Applicants should select only the most relevant metrics for the project (all possible program metrics are shown in Appendix A). To increase consistency in the usage and calculations of metrics, the [2025 Metrics Guidance](#) document provides additional details and instructions about each metric. Please ensure that, upon choosing a metric to include in your proposal, the calculation of the target value accounts for the instructions listed in the Metrics Guidance. If you believe an applicable metric has not been provided or have metrics questions, please contact Evie Kraner (evie.kraner@nfwf.org).

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- ✓ Eligible applicants include: non-profit 501(c) organizations; federal, state, interstate, local and municipal governments, Tribal governments and organizations, and educational institutions.
- ✗ Ineligible applicants include: unincorporated individuals, businesses, and international organizations.

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, compensatory mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon baseline legal and permit compliance efforts (e.g., Projects that go above and beyond minimum legal compliance benefitting both stormwater management and fish and wildlife habitat).
- Equipment: Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering or renewing a contract) that use telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness, and compliance with NFWF and funding source [policies](#). Proposals will then be evaluated by review teams representing program funders and technical experts based primarily on the extent to which they meet the following criteria:

Program Goals and Strategies – Reviewers will refer to the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program [Framework](#) to assess project relevance and alignment to Program goals and strategies. Proposed activities should substantially contribute to on-the-ground habitat restoration and/or species conservation goals and priorities outlined in the Framework. Competitive proposals will address one or more of the Strategic Program Areas and contain one or more Cross-Program Activities. Project proposals should clearly state which Strategic Program Area the project will address and provide context for the need, objectives, expected outcomes, and means to measure



the success of proposed actions. Projects should include specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success.

Technical Merit – The project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical, and achievable work plan. The work plan should include activities, roles (including partner roles), outcomes, a timeline, and a plan for monitoring project effectiveness and meeting proposed outcomes during and after the project period. The work plan should also note if and how the project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time including how future funding will be secured for necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities. The project should engage appropriate technical experts (or include expert staff) throughout project planning, design, and implementation. Project outcomes should be reasonable and measurable. Proposals should note a project’s demonstration value and/or potential and plans to transfer lessons learned to other communities, practitioners or to be integrated into government programs and policies. For Capacity Building and Planning proposals, the applicant must clearly demonstrate how efforts will lead to project implementation.

Partnership and Community Impact – Applicants should partner and engage collaboratively with local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the proposed project. This ensures long-term sustainability and success of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Partners or communities should be enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project. The proposal should describe how the project will be maintained after the period of performance ends. Proposed partners and roles—including short- and long-term—should be clearly identified (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant). Applicants should describe the community characteristics of the project area, identify any communities impacted, and describe outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Applicants should use data to support descriptions and submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

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.

Cost-Effectiveness – Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the economically most efficient way to meet project objectives. Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of effective direct/indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget according to the type, size and duration of project and project objectives. Project budgets will be compared to similar projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project. We anticipate allowing match to be incurred between January 1, 2024, and the proposed project end date, pending confirmation of the match look back period in our funding agreement with the FWS. Match timing should be noted within the match description section of the proposal. The value of land protection activities, including easements or acquired parcels, is eligible. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a mix of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review. Federal funding requires a 1:1 non-federal match (except for Capacity Building grants). Voluntary additional match beyond the 1:1 requirement may be from either federal or non-federal sources.

Conservation Context (connectivity) – The project is thoughtfully presented within its broader watershed and/or landscape context. Applicant clearly describes why this project should be implemented in this specific location at this time with these partners. Proposal clearly addresses the project’s “institutional significance,” i.e. how the project contributes to other plans and programs, including organizational, local, state, regional, recreational, resilience, etc. plans and programs (please refer to the [Framework Appendix II](#) for additional information on relevant plans). The proposal should identify any risk factors that may influence expected project outcomes. Proposals for distinct phases of a larger project should include outcomes and lessons learned from prior project phases. Applicants with existing active DWCF grants should be advised that cumulative awards and prior performance will be evaluated during the review.

There are a variety of tools and plans available that can be used for reference purposes for Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund proposals (see also this [Toolbox](#) for the DWCF). These should be used to inform and contextualize projects but not be perceived as limiting prospective projects to only those species, habitats and ecological services identified therein. Proposals to address broader habitat needs and other important species, or other priorities identified in the [Framework](#), are eligible and encouraged.

- NFWF’s Delaware River Watershed [Business Plan](#), which was developed with input from a wide range of watershed partners and stakeholders. The goals and strategies included in the Business Plan are the result of a watershed-wide fish and wildlife habitat prioritization process and geospatial analysis—and they provide a distinct avenue for achieving measurable impact on the ground for habitat and water quality. Proposals should describe in detail how the project addresses priority species and focal areas in the Business Plan.
- Applicants proposing projects that address the needs of priority at-risk species (ARS), Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species, or NFWF Business Plan priority species can apply to any of the four funding categories listed above. Proposals should focus on specific actions that have been identified as priorities and are listed in the [DWCF Priority Species](#) document. Application narratives should reference the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA), [Northeast Region State Wildlife Action Plan database](#) and/or species [recovery](#) or conservation plans listed in the DWCF Priority Species document and explain how the proposed conservation actions contribute to regional/range-wide conservation plans for

the species. Letters of support from state wildlife agencies and prior coordination are highly encouraged.

- Applicants proposing projects on private, working lands to help agricultural producers design and implement conservation practices should ensure the project is in alignment with NRCS goals and priorities by conferring with the NRCS State Conservationist and their staff in the state in which your project is located. A list of NRCS contacts can be found [here](#).

Spatial Data – Project spatial data submitted to NFWF’s online mapping tool should accurately represent the location(s) of conservation activity(ies) at the time of proposal submission. Successful projects will be required to submit improved spatial data for each conservation activity within the period of performance as necessary. In 2025, all DWCF applicants will be required to enter their proposed projects into [FieldDoc](#) at the time of application. When setting up proposed projects in FieldDoc, please be sure to list your application’s 5-digit Easygrants number in the FieldDoc Pact name.

Free technical assistance will be available to grantees to ensure accurate tracking and reporting of applicable project activities during the grant project period of performance. For technical support on FieldDoc utilization during the proposal development process, please contact FieldDoc support through The Commons at support@fielddoc.org. Additional guidance is available at help.fielddoc.org.

OTHER

Environmental Services – NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in, facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

Intellectual Property – Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF’s website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to: habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), and carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions).

Period of Performance – The Period of Performance is the time between the start and end date of a project for which all activities in the scope of work and requested budget must be included. Expenses incurred outside of the start and end dates cannot be reimbursed. Applicants may include match incurred between January 1, 2024 and the proposed end date, but the project period of



performance should have a start date aligned with the start of project activities included in the NFWF funding request. This means match may be raised and spent prior to the project start date (though no earlier than January 1, 2024) but no later than the project end date. Match timing should be noted within the match description section of the proposal. Projects must be ready to begin within six months of the grant award and be completed within three years of award. It is up to the applicant to specify the period of performance for their project that is appropriate for the work they are proposing to complete. For this funding opportunity, a project cannot have a start date prior to July 1, 2025, or an end date after December 31, 2028.

Procurement – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not 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.

Receiving Award Funds – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request for an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds. Requests for monthly advances will not be considered.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected will be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (state and federal), 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. The compliance process should be executed in a timely manner and reimbursement for project activities, including non-construction activities, may be delayed until compliance requirements are complete. **Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals.** As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances. NFWF has made [resources](#) available to assist grantees in completing NEPA and other federal compliance. These resources include templates, contacts, and a NFWF-funded consultant available to review documentation and provide process guidance. Please see the [tip sheet](#) for more information. Current compliance standing for existing NFWF grants will be considered when reviewing and selecting new proposals.

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.

NRCS Funding – In 2025, NFWF has additional, dedicated funding from NRCS to support projects providing technical assistance to interested farmers, ranchers, and private forestland owners to develop management plans, design and implement conservation practices, share their experiences and lessons learned, and participate in Farm Bill programs, especially the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). A particular emphasis should be placed on promoting, designing, and implementing conservation practices that improve soil health, support grazing system resiliency, restore wetlands, develop perennial wildlife habitat, improve nutrient management, and enhance forest health.

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through NFWF’s Easygrants system by Tuesday, May 13, 2025, 11:59 PM, ET.

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. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
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 [Tip Sheet](#) is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This RFP document can be downloaded [here](#).

Guidance and best practice documents have been pulled together to assist grantees in building a strong proposal:

- [Metrics Guidance](#)
- [Letters of Support Best Practices](#)
- [DWCF Toolbox](#)
- [NEPA Compliance Guidance](#)

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website’s [Applicant Information](#) page.



For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

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For one-on-one guidance, sign up for a virtual proposal lab:

The FWS, in collaboration with NFWF, will be holding weekly virtual proposal labs for the 2025 RFP from January 28th through May 8th. The labs will provide a space and time where partners can share proposal ideas and receive coaching and constructive feedback. To reserve some time in the lab, please visit our [Bookings page](#). We're excited to work hand-in-hand with our partners to make certain they get the support needed to develop competitive proposals, ensuring that the DWCF funds the most effective and innovative conservation activities in the Delaware River watershed. **In 2025, applicants requesting \$1,000,000 or more are required to meet with the DWCF team via a virtual proposal lab before submitting an application.**

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: 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.