National Wildlife Refuge Friends Grant Program
2011 Application Kit

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, along with its partners, recognizes the important role refuge Friends organizations play in building critical community support for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. As such, we are requesting proposals for projects that assist organizations to be effective co-stewards of our Nation's important natural resources within the National Wildlife Refuge System. This program provides competitive seed grants ($1,500 - $5,000) to creative and innovative proposals that seek to increase the number and effectiveness of organizations interested in assisting the Refuge System nationwide and their work and projects to support the System.

SPECIAL EMPHASIS FOR 2011: BIRDING-RELATED PROJECTS

In addition to the start-up, capacity-building and project specific grants this program has supported in the past, this year's program will also prioritize those proposals that initiate or improve birding opportunities for refuge visitors.

The National Wildlife Refuge System Birding Initiative is an effort to strengthen the Refuge System's relationships with the large and growing number of Americans who enjoy bird watching. These birders can become enthusiastic advocates for the Refuge System and supporters of refuge Friends organizations. The Refuge System provides Americans with special places to connect with nature and offers unparalleled birding opportunities and other wildlife-dependent activities to experience and showcase wildlife.

Friends organizations are well-positioned to provide support and expertise to refuge birding programs nationwide. Many Friends organizations and individual members are indeed already skilled and provide generous contributions of time and support to Refuge System birding programs in a variety of capacities. From leading and organizing bird walks and other birding programs to developing birding enhancement guides and other resources that provide current and accurate information to visitors, Friends organizations are an integral part of creating "birder-friendly" refuges.

Competitive proposals will specify particular benefits to refuge birders and visitors who enjoy birds. Some priority refuge projects specifically identified by the Birding Initiative that Friends can assist refuges include:

- Having an accurate, updated refuge bird checklist available
- Public facilities (viewing decks, photo blinds, boardwalks, etc.) for birders
- After-hours birding information available
- Interpretive walks, signs and exhibits for birders
- Optics and field guide loan program
- Refuge bird and birding information Friends web site

View more refuge information and examples about incorporating birder-friendly components in your projects at: www.fws.gov/refuges/birding

Who is eligible to apply?
Eligible applicants are non-profit organizations or organizations that have applied for non-profit status, including refuge Friends organizations, Cooperative and Interpretive Associations, Audubon Chapters and other citizen support organizations interested in assisting a National Wildlife Refuge or group of refuges and the Refuge System as a whole. Applicants must either be tax exempt under section 501(c), OR be in the process of applying for 501(c)(3) status and submit with their grant application a copy of the letter from the IRS confirming your application has been filed.

What kinds of proposals will be accepted?
Grants will be provided to support proposals that fall within the following areas, with special of emphasis on those proposals that initiate or improve birding opportunities for refuge visitors:

- **Start-up Grants** - Funds will be provided to assist starting refuge Friends organizations with formative and/or initial operational support. For example, funds may be requested for such things as membership drives, training (tuition), brochure and newsletter development, logo design, or consultant fees for planning a mission and strategic plan;
- **Capacity Building Grants** - Funds will be provided to strengthen the capacity of existing refuge Friends organizations to enable them to be more effective. For example, activities may include outreach efforts, strategic planning, membership development, board or leadership development, designing exhibits for community outreach, or training; and
- **Project Specific Grants** - Funds will be provided to non-profit organizations seeking support for a specific project. For example, funds may be requested for developing outreach and conservation education programs for local schools, communities, and private landowners, habitat restoration projects, building an observation tower, developing and providing interpretive materials and programs, or watchable wildlife programs.

While this grant program focuses on three areas and an emphasis on initiating or improving birding opportunities on refuges, overarching goals of the program are to help refuge Friends organizations gain experience in developing projects, expand and increase their capacity and skills, meet local refuge challenges, gain and build community recognition and support for the refuge and refuge Friends organizations, and build long-term relationships. Within each area of emphasis, priority will be given to applications that demonstrate their ability to meet these programmatic goals.

What information should be included in my application?

1) The National Wildlife Refuge Friends Easygrants Application, www.nfwf.org/grantapplication
2) The Full-proposal Project Narrative – Friends of National Wildlife Refuges Form
3) The Applicant and Refuge Manager Signature Page

What are the funding limitations for this grants program?
The *Refuge Friends Grant Program* will NOT fund requests for:

- Printing for Professional Publishing Purposes;
- Political advocacy or litigation activities;
- Travel;
- Salaries;
- Non-profit filings;
- Food or beverages;
- Shortfalls in government agency budgets; or
- Multi-year grants (applicant may reapply)

When are proposals due and when will applicants be notified of award status?

- **April 29, 2011** - with final funding decisions and applicant notification by July 11, 2011; *and*
- **September 2, 2011** - with final funding decisions and applicant notification by December 7, 2011.

Program Contacts

The following partner contacts are available to applicants to discuss proposal ideas and answer questions about this program.

Teal Edelen, *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation*, 202-857-0166, teal.edelen@nfwf.org

Mike Carlo, *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*, 703-358-2029, Michael.Carlo@fws.gov

Joan Patterson, *National Wildlife Refuge Association,* 1-877-396-NWRA, jpatterson@refugeassociation.org

Connie Mahan, *National Audubon Society,* 202-861-2242 ext 3036, cmahan@audubon.org

The *National Wildlife Refuge Friends Grant Program* is a collaborative effort between the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge Association, and National Audubon Society. For further information, please contact Teal Edelen at NFWF, 1133 15th Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005, or call (202) 857-0166.