NFWF

National Wildlife Refuge Friends

2018 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: ***Tuesday, September 27th 2018* by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

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 national program provides competitive grants ($1,500 - $15,000) to *creative and innovative* proposals that seek to increase the effectiveness of Friends organizations assisting the Refuge System nationwide. Funding for the Friends program comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The main goal of the grant program is to foster active, vibrant and effective Friends partnerships through four distinct proposal categories:

1. **Nonprofit Capacity Building Grants** – Funds will be provided to assist both starting and established refuge Friends organizations to build their capacity. Funds for newly forming or reviving organizations may include formative and/or initial operational support. For example, funds may be requested for such things as membership drives, logo design, or consultant fees for website development. Funds for established refuge Friends organizations may include activities that strengthen an organization's ability to fully achieve its mission and sustain itself over time. For example, funds may be requested for a new event or expansion of an existing event, strategic planning consultant, membership or volunteer development activities, new software, or contributing to the building of a new community partnership.

2. **Project Specific Grants** – Funds will be provided to refuge Friends organizations seeking support for projects initiated and managed by the Friends. For these grants, Friends must clearly demonstrate their involvement in all elements of the project in their narrative, including how the project will benefit the Friends and foster increased engagement of the public, community, volunteers and/or members. For example, funds may be requested for a Friends organization which proposes to develop and deliver environmental education programs for local schools, manage a habitat restoration project from start to finish, manage the construction of an observation tower and how the Friends intend to use the facility to increase engagement with the Friends organization, or develop interpretive materials and programs that will be used by or delivered by the Friends organization.

*It should be clear that projects are managed and/or implemented by the Friends organization and will provide a benefit to the Friends organization.
**Projects must be new OR be an expansion and/or improvement to an existing project. Funds cannot be applied to previously existing expenses for an existing project.
***Please contact Traci Giefer to discuss any questions you might have about project ideas or project eligibility.

3. **Peer-to-Peer Coaching (P2P)** – Funds will be provided to refuge Friends organizations who propose to coordinate and execute a Friends training workshop for a minimum of three other refuge Friends organizations. See specific requirements for this category below.

Peer-to-Peer Coaching Proposal Requirements:
Your USFWS Regional Friends Coordinator must be contacted, identified and involved as an official Service contact with the coaching planning effort. Additionally, all affiliated USFWS staff should be invited to the entire training, but are not required to attend. Agenda development and content is at the discretion of the applicant and site manager following the guidelines below.

Applications must contain a draft agenda, which includes at least one session either led or co-led with USFWS staff and at least three of the following session topics:

- Board development and management
- Board/member/volunteer engagement and retention
- Developing community partnerships
- Planning: Goal setting, project planning, annual work planning
- Communication and cooperation
- Overview of the USFWS/NWRS/Refuges
- Overview of and the roles and responsibilities of USFWS-Friends partnerships

Funds for Peer-to-Peer Coaching may be used for:

- Friends travel and lodging expenses (GSA per diem rates for lodging and actual meals up to GSA per diem rate; IRS volunteer mileage rate of .14c/mile for driving personal vehicle; economy nonrefundable airfare)
- Training facility fees (only if appropriate free facilities are not available)
- Specialized trainer, consultant, or facilitator fees
- Training supplies such as flip charts, poster boards, copying expenses

Funds for Peer-to-Peer Coaching may <u>not</u> be used for:

- In-training food such as snacks and beverages, and social event food such as hors d'oeuvres and alcohol
- Airline seat upgrades, airfare insurance
- Rental cars (special exceptions on a case by case basis)
- Any expenses for participating Service employees
- An event agenda that includes any instruction on lobbying or instruction intended to influence elected officials on legislation

4. **<u>Special Initiative</u>: Public Access Enhancements and Increasing Hunting and Fishing Experiences on National Wildlife Refuges –** There is approximately $50,000 in funds available to refuge Friends organization seeking to work with their Service site and partners in the following categories:

    1. Access and Facilities: Develop new or repair/improve/expand existing public access points or facilities, or construct new recreational infrastructure including but not limited to:

        - Roads, trails, boat ramps, fishing docks, hunt blinds
        - Information kiosks and signs which better welcome and orient hunters and anglers
        - Above facilities or infrastructure for people with disabilities

    2. Outreach, Experiences and Education Programs: Work in collaboration and coordination with State, Local, and Tribal governments to support hunting and fishing recruitment, retention, and reactivation efforts by dovetailing, developing new, or improving or expanding hunting or fishing experiences and/or programs including but not limited to:

        - Hunter and angler education and mentor programs (e.g., mentored hunting program, outdoor skills programs and centers, angler skills class, fishing camps)
        - Hunting or fishing events (e.g., intro to archery, fishing derbies or tournaments)
        - Awareness campaigns or targeted communications (e.g., National Hunting and Fishing Day, National Fishing and Boating Week, Take Me Fishing)
        - Tackle loaner programs or equipment giveaway outreach programs
        - Above programs targeting youth, veterans, and people with disabilities

    3. Habitat Restoration: Partner with habitat restoration projects which seek to enhance sustainable hunting and fishing programs.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency between the monitoring data provided by multiple grant projects, the National Wildlife Refuge Friends Program has a list of metrics in Easygrants for grantees to choose from for reporting. We ask that you select the 1-3 most relevant metrics from this list for your project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Traci Giefer to discuss acceptable alternatives

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Building institutional capacity	# of orgs contributing to goals	Use this metric to capture the number of Friends Groups or partnering organizations facilitated by the program.

	Value of volunteer services	Use this metric to indicate the number of Friends-driven volunteer work days.
	# volunteers participating	Use this metric to indicate the number of Friends Group members and/or volunteers.
	# number of volunteer hours	Enter number of volunteer hours for this project.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Refuge Friends organizations whose primary mission is to support a refuge or a complex of refuges. 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.

- NFWF funds can be used to pay for a student intern that is currently enrolled in an educational, career development or job training program through a partnership organization. The partnering organization must cover tort and liability for the intern and the interns work must directly support the capacity building and/or projects of the Friends organization.

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.
- NFWF funds may not be used for printing for for-profit purposes, lobbying activities, salaries, non-profit filings, food or beverages, refuge-administered projects, shortfalls in government agency budgets.
- NFWF funds may not be used to pay for volunteer services. NFWF funds can be used to pay for a student intern that is currently enrolled in an educational, career development or job training program through a partnership organization. The partnering organization must cover tort and liability for the intern and the interns work must directly support the capacity building and/or projects of the Friends organization.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The National Wildlife Refuge Friends Program will award approximately $150,000 nationwide in grants this year. Grant awards will range from $1,500 - $15,000. Friends organizations are encouraged (but not required) to contribute 1:1 non-federal matching contributions. All Friends grants should be completed within two years of project start date.

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.

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.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other Friends organizations or communities.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

OTHER

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.

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.

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 of 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.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, 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. 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.

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.

Federal Funding – The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

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/refugefriends*).

Applicant Webinar	*July 19th, 11:00 AM, EDT*
Full Proposal Due Date	*September 27th, 11:59 PM, EDT*
Review Period	*September 28th – early December*
Awards Announced	*Week of December 14th*

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through the 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 as 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 at *National Wildlife Refuge Friends*.

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded at *National Wildlife Refuge Friends*. 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).

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

Traci Giefer, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 612-564-7296, Traci.Giefer@nfwf.org

Joanna Webb, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 703-358-2392, Joanna_Webb@fws.gov

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.