

2021 Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund RFP: Informational Webinar December 10, 2020

Skinner Mountain, TN Credit: David Johnston

## **WEBINAR GUIDELINES**

- All attendees will be muted for the duration of the webinar.
- Please type your questions into the "questions" box in the webinar controls on the right side of your screen. NFWF staff will answer these questions during several breaks in the presentation, but you can type them in any time. Everyone will be able to hear the answers.
- Don't be shy. If you have a question, someone else is thinking it, too.
- If you experience a technical glitch, please type it into the chat/question box.
- The Webinar is being recorded and we will post a copy of these slides and the recording on the NFWF website at <u>www.nfwf.org/cumberland</u>.



## **WEBINAR AGENDA**

- Program Overview
- Program Priorities
- Submitting a Competitive Proposal
- Application Guidance
- Tips and Timeline
- Resource Links





#### What is the CUMBERLAND PLATEAU STEWARDSHIP FUND?

A competitive grant program funded through a public-private partnership between...

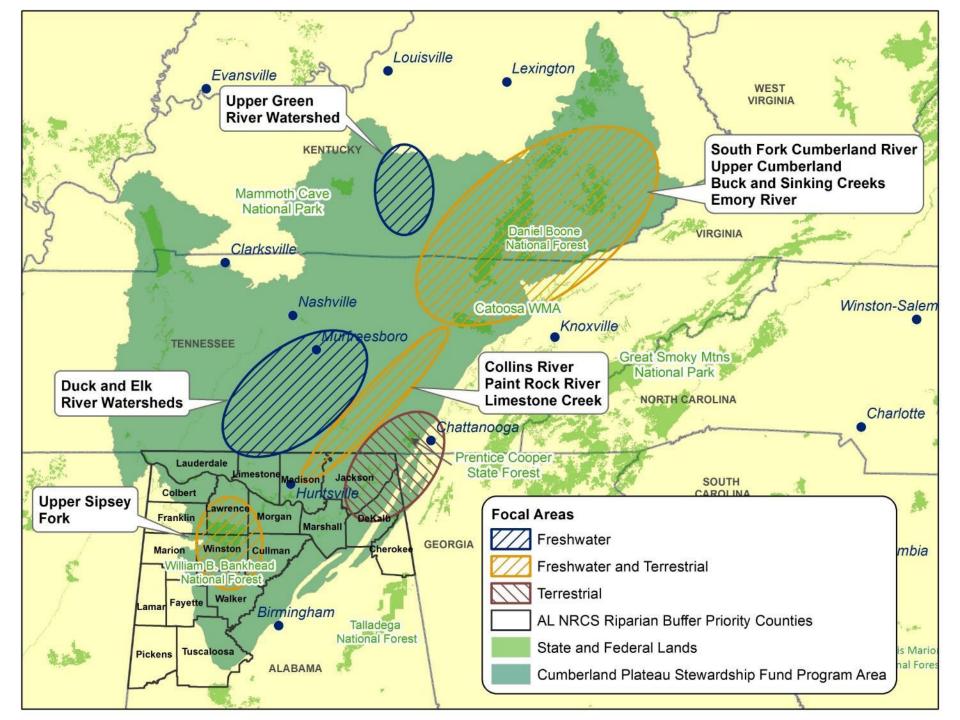




#### That does the following...

- Accelerates restoration and enhancement of native forests and freshwater habitats
- **Supports** the recovery of species representative of healthy, sustainable woodland/savanna forests and freshwater systems
- *Supports* the goals and missions of each funding partner





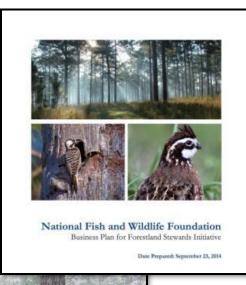
Shortleaf Pine Restoration Plan:

Restoring an American Forest Legacy

#### What are the program's objectives?

**The Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund** seeks to achieve the following conservation outcomes in 2021:

- 1. Establish **1,000 acres** of shortleaf pine/upland savanna forest.
- 2. Enhance **10,000 acres** of shortleaf pine/upland savanna ecosystem on public and private lands.
- 3. Establish or enhance **1,000 acres** of riparian forest.
- 4. Protect **500 acres** of working forests and/or riparian forests with conservation easements.
- 5. Improve management of **15 miles** of stream and associated stream habitat.





The Southeastern

Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Strategy

#### What are the program's objectives?

- Increase populations of northern bobwhite and prairie warbler, as well as fish, amphibians and other aquatic species, representative of healthy, sustainable woodland/savanna forests and freshwater systems.
- 6. Engage more than **500 private landowners** in restoration and enhancement activities.





#### Where should projects take place?

#### Projects should occur in the following states...

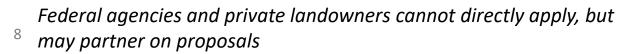
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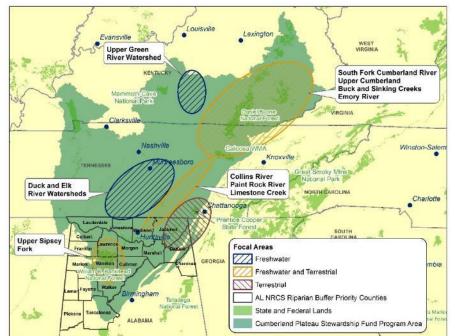
#### Lands eligible for funding include:

- Privately-owned lands
- State and local government lands
- Federal lands (preference for projects that include work on federal lands <u>and</u> on state, local and/or private lands)

#### Applicants must be one of the following:

- Non-profit 501(c)
- State, tribal and local governments
- Academic institutions





#### **Cumberland Plateau Fund Landscape**



#### Funding Availability:

- Approximately \$1 million available (total) in 2021.
- Grant awards will range from \$100,000 to \$250,000, depending on the overall scale of the project.

#### To be eligible for funding, proposals must adhere to the following:

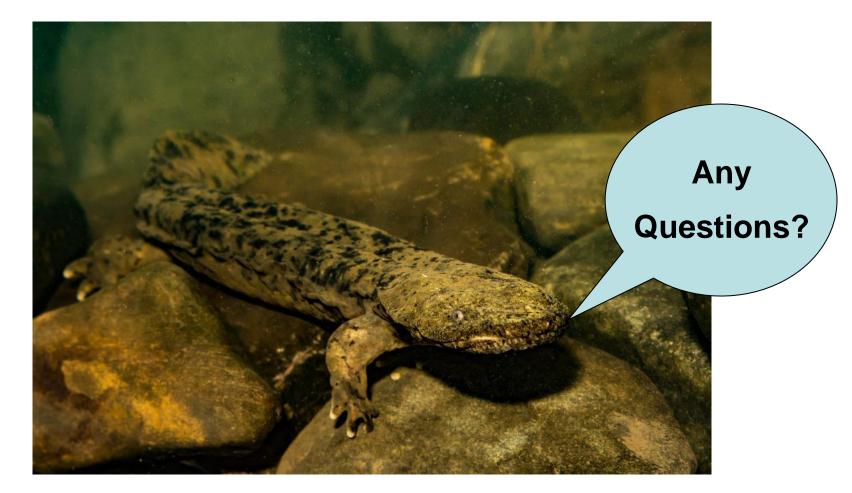
- 1. Have **at least** 1:1 match ratio of non-federal cash or in-kind services.
- 2. Project periods **up to two years**, with significant deliverables achieved in year one.
- 3. Be in good standing with NFWF regarding existing grant/reporting requirements.
- 4. Describe progress to-date on current CPSF grants if applicable.



#### **Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds**

- Equipment: Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and costeffective 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.
- Political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- Support of 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.







# What are the program's funding priorities?

- **1. Establishing Shortleaf Pine and Oak Forests**
- 2. Enhancing and Maintaining Existing Shortleaf Pine/Shortleaf-Oak Habitat
- **3.** Restoring and Enhancing Riparian Forests and Watershed Health to Support Aquatic Species
- 4. Expanding and Coordinating Technical Assistance and Outreach
- 5. Conservation Easements



NFWF is particularly interested in projects that help improve the understanding and quantification of the **carbon** and **water** benefits of upland and riparian forest restoration, enhancement and management projects, as well as conservation practices on agricultural lands.



- 1. Establishing Shortleaf Pine and Oak Forests
  - May include site preparation and planting (seedlings and labor)
- 2. Enhancing and Maintaining Existing Shortleaf Pine and/or Oak Forest Ecosystems
  - Prescribed Fire
    - Strategies to promote coordination and increase prescribed burning capacity – ex. burn teams, burn associations
    - Training and technical assistance, including assisting USDA staff in writing burn plans and implementing financial assistance contracts
    - Incentives to increase Rx fire acres and burn frequency on private lands
    - Identify and address specific barriers or roadblocks to fire implementation
  - Other Silvicultural Treatments
    - Thinning, invasive species control, mechanical and/or chemical treatments
    - Planting native understory species







#### **3.** Restore and Enhance Riparian Forests and Watershed Health to Support Aquatic Species

#### **Restore and Enhance Riparian Forests**

- Reforest riparian buffers with native riparian forest species
- Implement forest management practices, such as thinning, that will improve wildlife habitat
- Control invasive species, such as hemlock woolly adelgid, which threaten riparian forest health

#### **Improve Conservation Practices on Agricultural Lands**

- Increase adoption of cover crops, reduced tillage, and diversified crop rotations in cropping operations
- Promote responsible incorporation of crop residue, manures, and other sources of organic matter into soil management systems
- Establish and enhance farmer-led education and outreach programs to drive increased adoption of soil health practices
- Install fencing and alternative watering systems to exclude livestock from streams







#### **3.** Restore and Enhance Riparian Forests and Watershed Health to Support Aquatic Species (cont.)

#### **<u>Restore Aquatic Connectivity and Improve In-Stream Habitat</u>** <u>**Conditions**</u>

 Remove or retrofit stream barriers (low-head dams) and stream crossings (culverts, concrete fords), and/or other instream restoration practices to improve aquatic habitat within focal watersheds





#### 4. Expanding and Coordinating Technical Assistance and Outreach

- I. Increase outreach and technical assistance delivery success
  - Increasing technical assistance capacity and conduct outreach to private landowners, develop management plans, and assist with implementation of restoration and management treatments.
  - Implementing innovative methods to engage private landowners or producers and expand on-the-ground restoration and protection activities on private lands.
  - Targeting outreach to landowners and working with NRCS and other partners to prioritize, plan and deliver NRCS financial assistance (ex. Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Working Lands for Wildlife) and other stewardship programs to improve habitat and support at-risk species.

#### II. Advancing New Market-oriented and/or Incentive Programs

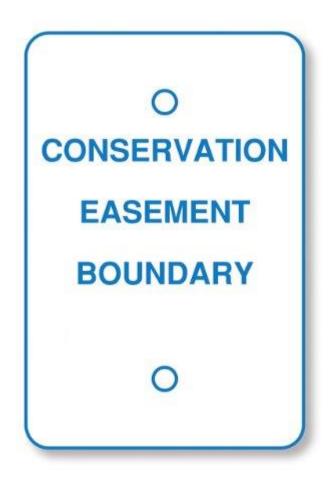
- Pilot innovative, market-oriented solutions and incentive programs that stimulate landowner participation in habitat restoration efforts.
- o Enhance restoration and maintenance activities

#### III. Third-party Forest Certification

 Increase participation in third-party forest certification programs to to encourage third-party verification of sustainable forest management practices for upland and/or riparian forests and associated wildlife.

#### **5. Conservation Easements**

- Targeted conservation easement projects that protect high quality, existing shortleaf pine, oak and/or riparian habitat, or key sites targeted for shortleaf, oak and/or riparian forest restoration
- Conservation easements should be included as a component of a broader proposal that also includes shortleaf and/or riparian forest restoration
- Transaction or due diligence costs
- Requests for conservation easement funding should not exceed 20% of the total proposal request





## **SUBMITTING A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL**

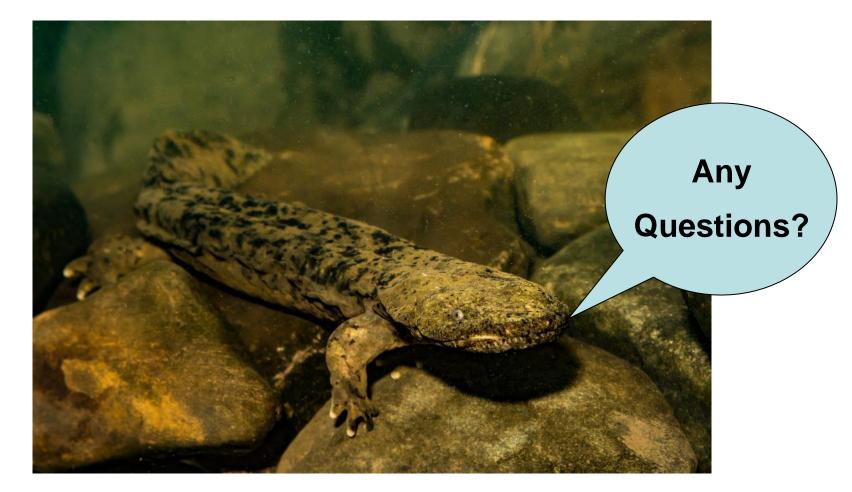
- 1. Program Goals and Priorities: All projects must include specific quantitative metrics that will be tracked and measured to evaluate project success.
- 2. Conservation Plan and Context: Does project support priorities and goals of the Forestland Stewards partnership business plan, Shortleaf Pine Initiative Restoration Plan, and/or other relevant plans?
- **3.** Technical Merit: Project will engage technical expertise throughout project planning, design and implementation.
- 4. Cost-Effectiveness: Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs in the proposed budget. The federal government has determined that a de minimis 10% indirect rate is an acceptable minimum for organizations without a NICRA, as such NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize ALL proposals with indirect rates above 10% for cost-effectiveness.
- 5. Funding Need: Explain how funding is essential for activities to move forward.

### **SUBMITTING A COMPETITIVE PROPOSAL**

6. Monitoring: Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

#### 7. Letters of Support:

- State forestry office(s)
- NRCS State conservationist(s)
- Other project partners
- 8. Partnerships: Demonstrate appropriate partnership exists or is developing to successfully implement project.
- **9. Sustainability:** Describe project maintenance post grant period including securing future funding.





## Application Guidance and Navigating Easygrants





Easygrants Helpdesk: Email: <u>easygrants@nfwf.org</u> Voicemail: 202-595-2497 Enter your login ID and password and click **Log In** below. If you have forgotten your password, click **Forgot your password?** below. If you are a first time visitor to this system, click **Register here** below.

### 

Log In



## **Easygrants – Creating Username or Organization**

irst Name *	Middle Name	
First Name	Middle Name	
Last Name *		
Last Name		
Login ID / Email *		
Login ID / Email		
Confirm Login ID / Email *		
Confirm Login ID / Email		
Password *		
Password		
Password Requirements		
Confirm Password *		
Confirm Password		

- Do not create duplicate accounts.
- Use your professional email address and full <u>legal</u> organization name.
- Unsure if you already have a user account <u>or</u> if organization is registered in Easygrants? Contact helpdesk at <u>easygrants@nfwf.org</u> or 202-595-2497.



## **Easygrants Profile**

	WF
	My Tasks My Grant: Profile pply For Funding
Home	
Change Password	View My Contact Details Click here Manage My Communication and Interests
FAQ	Manage My Demographics
Log Out	Scroll down
	Phone Add

Please visit review your contact details and make sure that you **provide a phone number** 



## **BEGINNING THE PROPOSAL**

- Easygrants.nfwf.org
- Apply for Funding
- Applicant Questionnaire
- My Tasks> Full Proposal

	Му Та	sks My Grants	Profile	Apply For Funding	
Home.	1		•		
Change Password			current fund	ding opportunities accepting	applications. To view more details on the Funding Opportunity, click Guidelines next to the portunity and click Continue.
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#### Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund Full Proposal Tip Sheet

Take Note: • Pop-ups: Easygrame uses pop-up windows to display some files. Places make sure your

web browser a lows for pop-up blocker must be

 Cookies: Easygrams uses cookies to maintain the session information. Flease

Make sure you are able to use Adobe

 SAVING AND SUBMITTING: Once an application has been initiated it may be saved and then modified and submitted at a

cleabled prior to beginning the application process. You can also try holding the Shift or Control (CTRL) key when clicking the link.

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PDF: Designants uses PDF's extensively

ader time, up to the application descline of February 18, 2021 11:50 PM Eastern Standard Time, Please note DO NOT hill the Submit buttor unit you are actually ready.

to submit. Once you hit submit the application is formally submitted and you

may no longer make changes.

#### STARTING AN APPLICATION

When you are ready to begin the application process, go to casygrams that are

- New users to the system will be promoted to register before starting their application
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- Once you are logged in, click the Apply for Funding betten, and selec. Cumbertand Placesu Stevardanip Fund from the factor Available Funcing Opportunities.
- Complete the Eligibility Guiz and Save and Submit your response.
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#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Ener the contact in formation for the primary tension responsible for completing the Easygrants apprication (this person is target as the Principal, Additional perconnel may be added to your Easygrants eccount by obsing the "Add" bottom and entering their information (agains a followingther).

#### ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

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Continue Cancel

## **APPLICATION COMPONENTS**

Home	Project Information		
	Due: 2/18/2021 11:59 PM ET		
Main	Bernstein, Zack  Grants  Cumberland Plateau-Southern Appal	achians Fund  Cumberland Pla	ateau-Southern Appalachians Fund 2021
Contact Information	Instructions		
Organization Information		ubmit, you will no longer be ab	v to view the pages where you will enter the in le to make changes. Click here to view Founda
Project Information	<ul> <li>Home brings you back to your He</li> <li>FAQ provides answers to common</li> </ul>	n questions about the Founda	tion's proposal elements.
Project Location	<ul> <li>Help provides guidance on both</li> <li>Log Out logs you out of the system</li> </ul>		related to completing many of the pages in the
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Uploads	Contact Information		Complete
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Contributions	Matching Contributions	*	Complete
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Permits and Approvals			
Review and Submit			
FAQ			
Help			
Log Out			

## **PROJECT INFORMATION**

- Period of Performance
- Requested Amount
- Title: (~100 characters)
  - short, descriptive name indicating project purpose
- Description: (~500 characters)
  - Main activities and methods
  - Specific habitat, location or species benefitted
- Abstract: (~1,500 characters)
  - Location, activities, outcome/metrics, and partners
  - Context and background information
  - Explain how outcomes will address a conservation issue



## **Project Title, Description and Abstract**

#### **Project Description:**

Use the best available science to map fire adapted ecological systems, conduct a consensusbased stakeholder process to prioritize sites for prescribed burns, and implement prescribed burning in three high priority locations within the Cumberland Plateau and Mountains in Tennessee. Project will improve forest habitat on 2,000 acres with prescribed fire, drive habitat restoration management to the highest priority locations, and maximize the future investments of all land managers in the region.

#### **Project Abstract**

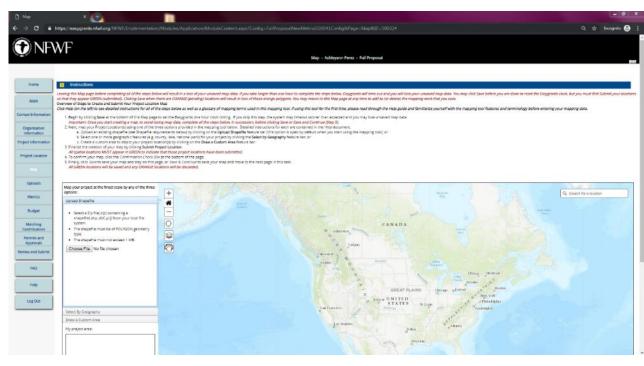
The Nature Conservancy will use the best available science to map fire adapted ecological systems, conduct a consensus-based stakeholder process to prioritize sites for prescribed fire and implement prescribed burns in three high priority locations within the Cumberland Plateau and Mountains in Tennessee.

Shortleaf pine and other fire-adapted forest and grassland ecosystems provide important habitat for a number of declining wildlife species, such as northern bobwhite quail, ruffed grouse and prairie warbler. Unfortunately, these ecosystems have experienced a rapid decline in the Cumberland Plateau region during the past several decades due to lack of fire, which is needed to maintain habitat structure and reduce competition from other plant species.

Project will improve forest habitat on 2,000 acres with prescribed fire, drive habitat restoration management to the highest priority locations, and maximize the future investments of all land managers in the region

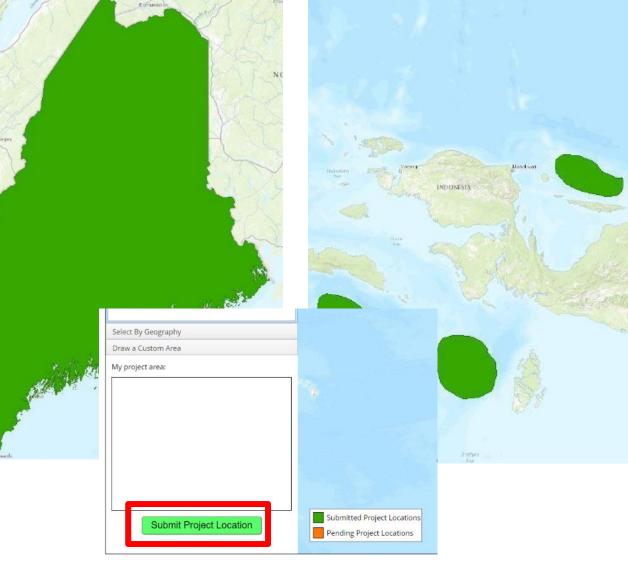
### MAP

- Use the full proposal mapping tool to draw your project location or upload a shapefile
- Map the location(s) where on-the-ground project work will occur
- Be as specific as possible!
- You should not select an entire state or county as your project location unless your project spans the entire region









- 1. Upload Shapefile
- 2. Select by Geography
- 3. Draw a Custom Area

 $\square$  I confirm that this project has been mapped as accurately as possible

Save and Continue

#### **UPLOADS**

#### > Upload Checklist

Upload Type	Required	Template
Cumberland Full Proposal Narrative	Yes	Cumberland Full Proposal Narrative Template
Project Map	Yes	
Letters of Support	No	
Photos - Jpeg	No	
Statement of Litigation	Yes	Statement of Litigation
Board of Trustees, Directors, or equivalent	Yes	
Applicant Controls Questionnaire	Yes	Applicant Controls Questionnaire Template
GAAP audited financial statements	Yes	
IRS Form 990	Yes	
A-133 Audit	Yes	
Indirect Rate Agreement	No	
Other Documents	No	



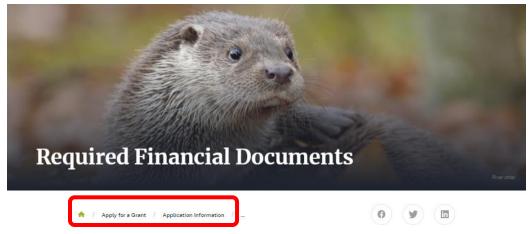


## **UPLOADS – FINANCIAL AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

All financial documentation must:

- Represent the same fiscal year period
- Must be the most recent financial information available
- Must be *less than* two years old

If you do not have a required financial document, then please upload an explanation on your company letterhead in place of the document.



The following financial documentation must be submitted with NFWF full proposals. Applicants are encouraged to provide this information at the time of application in order to prevent review, approval and/or contracting delays (if applicable). Below, you will find a list of Frequently Asked Questions to assist you with compiling the required information. If you have additional questions regarding documentation requirements or unanswered questions, please contact the NFWF staff representative listed in the RFP or your Grants Administrator.

All documentation must represent the same fiscal year period, must be the most recent financial information available, and must be less than two years old.

The following table breaks out the required documents by type of entity:

	Required Financial Documentation						
Organization Type	<sup>1</sup> I-990 or Electronic Notice	EIN or FEIN	DUNS Number	Single Audit <sup>2</sup>	GAAP Audit	<sup>3</sup> Balance Sheet AND Income Statement	<sup>4</sup> NICRA or CAP

For details on what documents you need to submit and for FAQs regarding financial documents, go here: <a href="https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/required-financial-documents">https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/required-financial-documents</a>



## **UPLOAD TIPS**

- Select the appropriate upload type from the dropdown menu when uploading financial documents.
- If an upload type for a specific financial document is not available, it means NFWF already has the document on file. Do not use the "Other Document" upload type. If unsure, contact NFWF staff directly to assist with securely uploading the financial document.
- To re-upload a document, you will need to first delete the original document and then upload the new/revised document

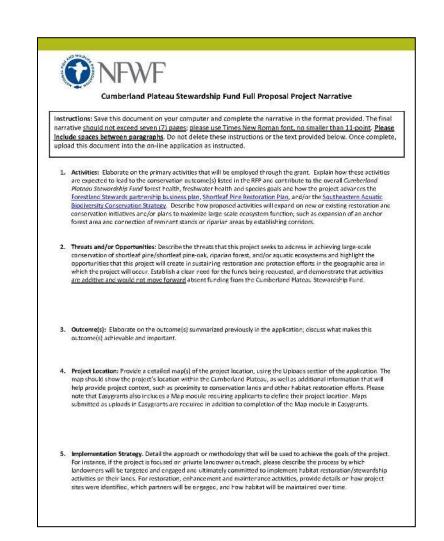
Choose Upload Type	Add files	Start upload	Cancel upload
Choose Upload Type			
Full Proposal Narrative			
Project Map			
Letters of Support			
Statement of Litigation			
Board of Trustees, Directors, or equivalent			
GAAP audited financial statements			
IRS Form 990			
A-133 Audit			
Indirect Rate Agreement			
Other Documents			



### **UPLOADS**

#### Proposal Narrative Template

- Download the Word template from Easygrants
- Proposals should be no more than 6 pages
- Keep the formatting same font, font size and margins
- Do not delete the text provided in the narrative
- Be concise and focus on project need, scope of work and deliverables.
- Upload into Easygrants either as a Word doc or PDF

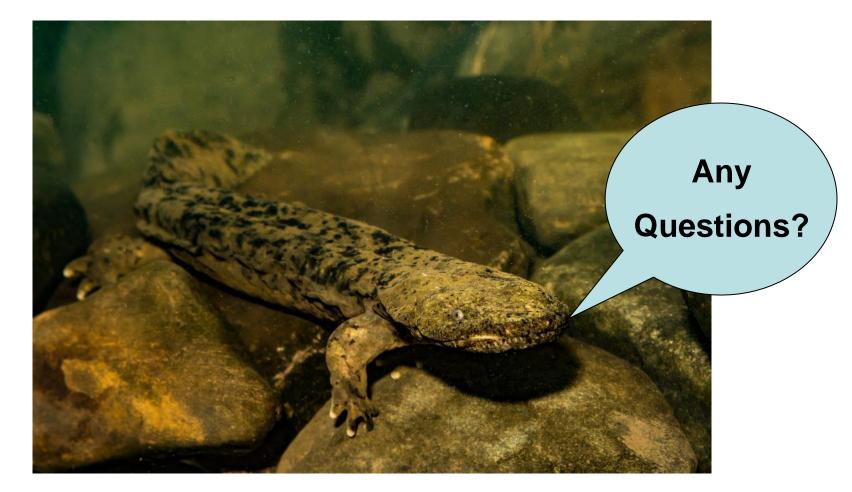




## **METRICS**

- Load program metrics using the "CPF Metrics" template from drop down menu.
- Each metric's "Target Value" should always be greater than the "Starting Value."
- Please enter "0" for the "Starting Value"

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		elect All	
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* If no	ne of the av	ailable metrics apply to your project, please contact 🛛 👔	





## BUDGET

- <u>Only</u> the grant amount requested from NFWF
- Itemize all costs in appropriate budget categories.
- No lumping costs i.e., 'All Salaries: \$10,000'
- 'Total Amount Requested' in <u>Project</u> <u>Information</u> section must equal the 'Budget Grand Total' in <u>Budget section</u>

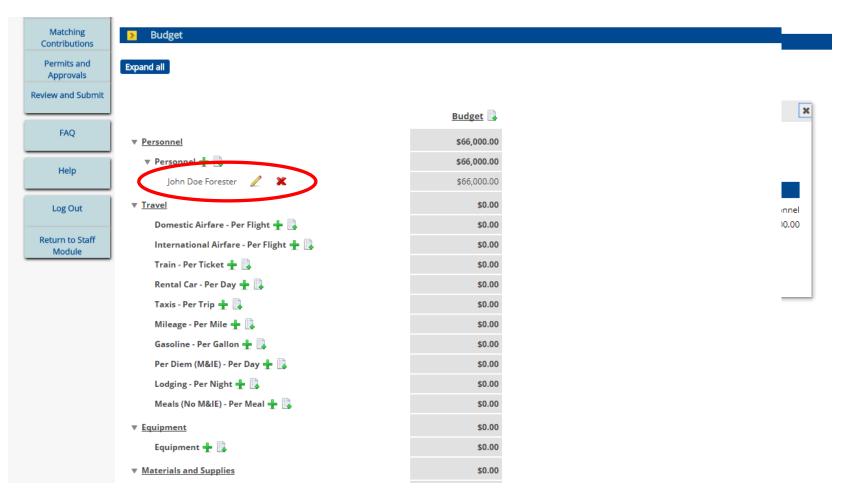
Materials and Supplies	\$0.00
Materials and Supplies  🛨 🖡	\$0.00
<u>Contractual Services</u>	\$0.00
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Subgrant - Per Agreement 🛛 🛨 🔃	\$0.00
Other Direct Costs	\$0.00
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Total Direct Costs	\$0.00
Total Indirect Costs	\$0.00
Total Costs	\$0.00

https://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages /budget-instructions.aspx



#### **BUDGET**

• Use the green plus sign |+| to add line items to the budget



#### **BUDGET**

- Use the 'notes' feature to add a narrative description for each section of the budget
- Each line item <u>must</u> include a corresponding narrative entry

Notes			×
Line Item		Personnel	
Budget		John Doe will provide technical assistance to private landowners, write management plans and assist with enrollment in financial assistance programs.	
Save	Save and Close Ca	ncel	

Learn more: http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/budget-instructions.aspx

## **MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS**

- Projects with **at least 1:1** non-federal match ratio will be most competitive
- Federally appropriated or managed funds are **ineligible**; e.g., Pittman-Robertson, Dingell-Johnson, Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act

Match must be:

- Raised and dedicated specifically for the project
- Spent between the project start and end dates designated in the grant application
- Voluntary in nature (mitigation, restitution, or other permit or court-ordered settlements are ineligible); and
- Applied only to the NFWF grant and not to any other federal matching programs



## **MATCHING 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 may be eligible
- ✓ Other tangible contributions to project goals



Barrier removal on Green River, KY Photo by Philip Scott Andrews

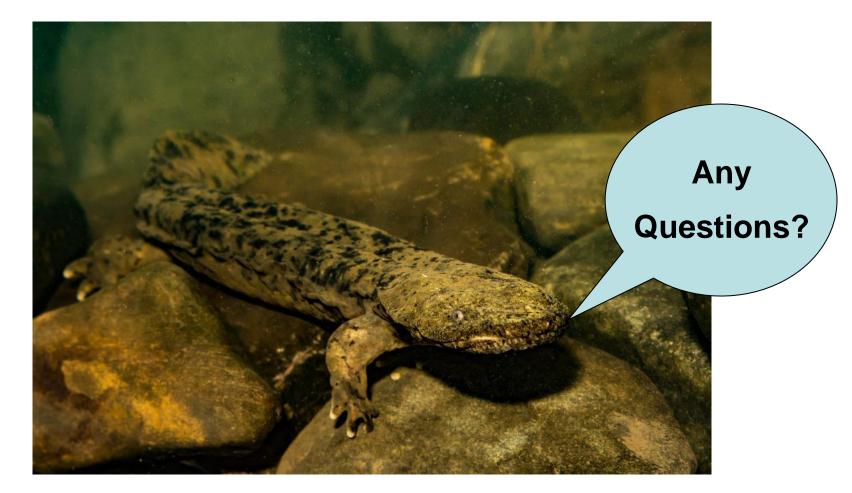


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## **ADDITIONAL APPLICATION DETAILS**

- Federal funding may be subject to requirements under the following acts. Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals.
  - National Environmental Policy Act
  - Endangered Species Act
  - National Historic Preservation Act
- Award payments are primarily <u>reimbursable</u>. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF.







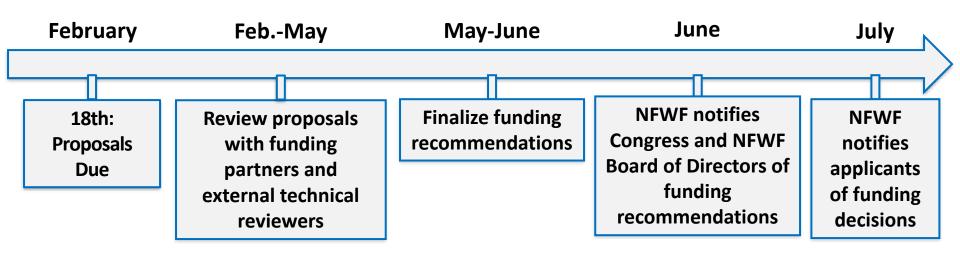
### **ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR APPLICANTS**

- If you've never used Easygrants before, create your login TODAY and familiarize yourself with the system.
- If you aren't new to Easygrants, check and make sure your login is working and that your organization's record is up to date in our system.
- Start the application as soon as possible to minimize last minute Easygrants trouble.
- Contact potential partners early in the process to develop project priorities, scope of work, and budget, as well as identifying sources of match.
- If you're not familiar with the Cumberland Plateau section of the Forestland Stewards business plan, please review: <u>https://www.nfwf.org/forestlandstewards/Documents/forestland-stewards-businessplan.pdf</u>
- We're here to help! Don't hesitate to contact us with questions about your proposal, Easygrants, etc.



#### TIMELINE

<u>2021</u>





#### **RESOURCES**

Tip Sheet

https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/Cumberland-2021-Tip-Sheet.pdf

NRCS State Conservationist and State Forestry Agency Contacts

https://www.nfwf.org/cumberland/Documents/NRCS%20State%20Conservationists+State% 20Foresters.pdf

**Required Financial Documents** 

http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/required-financial-docs.aspx

**Budget Instructions** 

http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/budget-instructions.aspx

**NFWF Indirect Policy** 

http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/indirect-policy.aspx

Mapping Tutorial

http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/mapping-tool.aspx

Forestland Stewards Business Plan

http://www.nfwf.org/forestlandstewards/Documents/forestland-stewards-business-plan.pdf

Shortleaf Pine Initiative

http://shortleafpine.net/

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Southeast Aquatics Biodiversity Strategy

http://southeastfreshwater.org/



## **QUESTIONS or COMMENTS**

Please direct programmatic questions to:

Jon Scott Southern Forests Program Director Jonathan.Scott@nfwf.org (202) 595-2609

Zack Bernstein Program Coordinator Zachary.bernstein@nfwf.org (202) 595-2433

Easygrants technical support:

Email helpdesk at <u>Easygrants@nfwf.org</u> or leave a message at 202-595-2497



