



# TOOLBOX

*for preparing proposals to the*  
**DELAWARE WATERSHED CONSERVATION FUND**



**NFWF**

# INTRO TO NFWF'S DELAWARE WATERSHED CONSERVATION FUND

## DELAWARE WATERSHED CONSERVATION FUND

The Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF) addresses near-term and long-range issues identified by the Delaware River Basin Restoration Partnership and Program [Framework](#), for measurable gains for fish and wildlife conservation, clean water, access to outdoor recreation, and other values and natural and economic benefits for people living in the basin. Major funding for the DWCF is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The fund was launched in 2018 as a first step toward delivering the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act, bringing together various stakeholders invested in restoration and conservation efforts throughout the Delaware River Watershed to address different strategic program areas and cross-program activities, build networks, and improve efficiency and focus on a basin-wide scale. DWCF projects are implemented entirely within the Delaware River watershed. The fund's investments target areas of regional significance for restoration and conservation in order to support ongoing efforts, increase capacity, and facilitate maximum adaptive potential in changing watershed conditions.

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# TOOLS FOR ESTABLISHING OUTCOMES

## WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS, ASSESSMENTS, AND BMPS

**FieldDoc:** <https://www.fielddoc.org/>

To assist applicants in generating credible metric estimates, NFWF has partnered with the Chesapeake Commons and the Academy of Natural Sciences to functionalize FieldDoc, a user-friendly tool that allows consistent planning, tracking, and reporting of water quality improvement activities and modeling of associated nutrient and sediment load reductions from proposed grant projects.

**Spreadsheet Tool for Estimating Pollutant Load (STEPL):** <https://www.epa.gov/nps/spreadsheet-tool-estimating-pollutant-loads-step1>

STEPL employs simple algorithms to calculate nutrient and sediment loads from different land uses and the load reductions that would result from the implementation of various best management practices (BMPs). STEPL provides a user-friendly Visual Basic (VB) interface to create a customized spreadsheet-based model in Microsoft (MS) Excel.

**Model My Watershed:** <https://wikiwatershed.org/model/>

Model My Watershed is a watershed-modeling web app that enables citizens, conservation practitioners, municipal decision-makers, educators, and students to: analyze real land use and soil data in their neighborhoods and watersheds; model stormwater runoff and water-quality impacts using professional-grade models; and compare how different conservation or development scenarios could modify runoff and water quality.

**CBP Expert Panels and Products:** [https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/bmp\\_expert\\_panels](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/bmp_expert_panels)

The Chesapeake Bay Program utilizes expert panels to establish BMP efficiencies and loading estimates for incorporating restoration and conservation actions into Chesapeake water quality goals. While many of those [products and analyses](#) are tied to CB models and physiographic regions, their approaches and estimates can be useful in informing loading calculations and practice effectiveness for the Delaware watershed. This one is particularly comprehensive:

- Chesapeake Bay Program Quick Reference Guide for Best Management Practices (BMPs): Nonpoint Source BMPs to Reduce Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Loads to the Chesapeake Bay and its Local Waters - [https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/BMPGuide\\_Full.pdf](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/BMPGuide_Full.pdf)

## SPECIES AND HABITAT

**Nature's Network:** <http://naturesnetwork.org/>

Nature's Network is a conservation design for the Northeast region, developed by a team of federal, state, academic, and NGO partners based on the best available science at this scale. It identifies a network of connected, intact, and resilient areas -- both lands and waters -- that encompass important habitats for key species. These areas are considered the best places to start for strategic conservation planning to support a sustainable future for both human and natural communities across the 13-state region. Our partners can apply this tool in the Delaware River Watershed to see how local conservation efforts fit into the bigger picture. That regional perspective can amplify local, state and regional conservation priorities by illustrating their significance on a landscape scale. In turn, by complementing regional priorities, our conservation work can make an impact beyond the watershed boundary by supporting the long-term viability of fish and wildlife species across their ranges.

- Data download: <http://naturesnetwork.org/data-tools/download-tables/>
- Data Basin for live mapping and/or overlay of project boundaries, and map output into PowerPoint, PDF or PNG formats: <https://nalcc.databasin.org/maps/522735111d19494a83b0a3badc710319/>

**Delaware River Watershed Business Plan:** <https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/delaware/Documents/delaware-river-watershed-business-plan.pdf>

In 2017, the Board of Directors of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation approved NFWF's Delaware River Watershed Business Plan. The plan was developed with the input of a broad range of Delaware River Watershed stakeholders, experts, and practitioners—and included an in-depth geospatial analysis performed by the Trust for Public Lands. The plan outlines the species, goals, strategies, and activities that will provide the biggest return on investment in the Delaware River Watershed.

**NatureServe Explorer:** <http://explorer.natureserve.org/>

NatureServe Explorer is an authoritative source for information on more than 70,000 plants, animals, and ecosystems of the United States and Canada. Explorer includes particularly in-depth coverage for rare and endangered species. Perform searches by Species and/or Ecological Communities & Systems by Name, Taxonomy, Location, or Conservation Status. Use the database to easily find scientific and common names, conservation status, distribution maps, images, life histories, conservation needs, and more.

**NatureServe National Species Dataset:** <http://www.natureserve.org/conservation-tools/national-speciesdataset>

NatureServe's foundational at-risk species dataset includes more than 900,000 location records (element occurrences) from our Network of biological inventories operating in all 50 states and in most of Canada. Over four decades, this network has collected and managed detailed local information on plants and animals of conservation concern. Representing the best available information on the known location, viability, and other information on at-risk species populations, this dataset is essential to regional and local analyses, decision-making, and planning.

**The Black Rail Conservation Plan:** <https://acjv.org/black-rail/>

The Black Rail Conservation Plan outlines the highest priority strategies needed to conserve the Eastern Black Rail throughout its former range on the Atlantic and Florida Gulf coasts. The plan sets population and habitat targets for the short and long term with a goal of creating sufficient habitat to support a sustainable population of Black Rails within the Atlantic Coast Joint Venture area.

**Saltmarsh Sparrow Conservation Information and Plan:** <https://acjv.org/saltmarsh-sparrow/>

This plan and mapping tool includes the Saltmarsh Sparrow Conservation Plan, which outlines the highest priority strategies needed to conserve the Saltmarsh Sparrow throughout its global range along the Atlantic coast. The plan sets population and habitat targets at the state and regional levels with a goal of creating sufficient high-quality habitat to support a long-term sustainable population of 25,000 Saltmarsh Sparrows. This site also provides access to the Saltmarsh Sparrow Habitat Prioritization Tool, which can be used to guide land protection and restoration efforts toward the most important patches for Saltmarsh Sparrow.

**Red Knot Resources:** <https://fws.gov/northeast/red-knot/>

This site has information and resources related to red knot conservation, including the Red Knot Species Assessment and Recovery Outline. Information here outlines the issues facing Red Knot, sets research priorities, prioritizes strategies towards recovery, and resources to support recovery efforts. The full recovery plan is not published yet; however, this USFWS site hosts resources and information related to Red Knot recovery.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE (DEIJ)

**Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed's DEIJ Toolkit:** <http://www.delriverwatershed.org/deij>

NFWF and our primary funding partner, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, feel it is important that our partners and grantees in the Delaware River watershed work toward implementing and encouraging inclusive practices that work to counteract discrimination and environmental injustice. It is important to incorporate diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) into practices and policies to foster a safe, diverse, equitable, and inclusive work environment which allows for new and impactful partnerships. The toolkit contains information on the importance of DEIJ, examples of environmental injustice in the Delaware River Watershed and beyond, common language, organizational governance, promoting DEIJ in the workplace, fostering an inclusive organization, recruitment and retention, links to additional resources and training, and a living glossary.

**EJSCREEN: Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool:** <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>

EJSCREEN is an environmental justice (EJ) mapping and screening tool that provides EPA with a nationally consistent dataset and approach for combining environmental and demographic indicators (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>). EJSCREEN users choose a geographic area; the tool then provides demographic and environmental information for that area. All the EJSCREEN indicators are publicly available data. EJSCREEN simply provides a way to display this information and includes a method for combining environmental and demographic indicators into EJ indexes. EJSCREEN includes 11 environmental indicators, 6 demographic indicators, and 11 EJ indexes.

## TOOLS FOR A ROBUST PROPOSAL

### DWCF PROPOSAL BEST PRACTICES

**Metrics Guidance:** <https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/delaware-river-program-2021-metrics-guidance.pdf>

To increase consistency in the usage and calculations of metrics, the NFWF Delaware team has created a “2021 Metrics Guidance” document to provide 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 details listed for the metric in the guide.

**Letters of Support Best Practices:** <https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/delaware-river-program-2021-letters-support-best-practices.pdf>

**Delaware River Program RFP Tip Sheet:** <https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/delaware-river-program-2021-tip-sheet.pdf>

### PERMITTING AND COMPLIANCE

**Fish and Wildlife Service NEPA Reference Handbook:** <https://www.fws.gov/r9esnepa/NEPA%20Handbook%20TOC.pdf>

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 DWCF projects initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Reimbursement for project activities may be delayed until compliance requirements are complete. Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. NFWF has made [resources](#) available to assist grantees in completing NEPA and other federal compliance upon award. These resources include templates, contacts, and a NFWF-funded consultant available to review documentation and provide process guidance.

### NFWF GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

**Applicant Information:** <https://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx>

**Indirect Cost Policy:** <https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/indirect-cost-policy>

**Indirect Cost Calculator:** <https://www.nfwf.org/grants/application-information/indirect-cost-calculator>

**Required Financial Documents:** <https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/required-financial-documents>

*This toolbox is not intended to be exhaustive, guarantee accuracy in estimating outcomes, or endorse the use of any tools over others. These resources should help provide contextual information for proposals. NFWF will update this document regularly as resources become available or are updated. If you have tools and resources you would like to suggest for the toolbox, please feel free to send them to [claire.flynn@nfwf.org](mailto:claire.flynn@nfwf.org). (Updated 1-11-2021)*

# Nature's Network

## Lands and waters sustaining wildlife and people in the Delaware River Basin

### Finding common ground to address shared priorities

From the Eastern brook trout living in the fabled Upper Delaware River trout streams of the Catskills, to the American shad that fed our founding families, to the horseshoe crabs and red knots that congregate on the Bayshore beaches each spring, thousands of species have found their niche in the region defined by the lands and waters of Delaware River Basin and Bayshores. Some are common, some are on the brink of extinction, but all depend on the Delaware River Basin's vital habitats to survive.

The resources sustaining these species also provide essential benefits like clean water to millions of people, including those living in New York City and Philadelphia. The Mid-Atlantic is the most densely populated region in the country, yet it is a place where people and nature have long coexisted. The Delaware River Basin is a mosaic of communities, working lands, open spaces and protected habitats. It is a place where our history has been shaped

by our relationship to the land, the rivers that flow from it, and our world renowned Bayshore and Atlantic beaches that offer a seasonal spectacle of some of the most impressive shorebird migrations on earth. But the environment, the ways in which we use the land, and the condition of other natural resources, are changing. And as these changes occur, they are threatening the character of the countryside that defines us, the resources we depend upon, and the wild things and places we care about. To support our outdoor spaces and traditions into the future, we need to work together.

### Laying the groundwork for unified action

In response to these threats, the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA) coordinated a team of partners from 13 states (including all four in the Delaware River Basin), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, nongovernmental organizations, and universities, who worked for more than a year to develop a

regional conservation design that provides a foundation for unified conservation action across the region.

Called ***Nature's Network***, the design identifies a network of places that help define the highest conservation priorities in the region to sustain natural resources and benefits for future generations. Led by partners from nearly 30 organizations using innovative modeling approaches developed by the University of Massachusetts Amherst and The Nature Conservancy (TNC), *Nature's Network*:

- Reflects scientific consensus from experts across the Delaware River Basin conservation and restoration community.
- Represents a shared vision for natural resources in the Delaware River Basin.
- Offers a practical set of tools to help people working at different scales contribute to regional conservation goals while meeting goals of their organizations.

### ***Nature's Network***

identifies the highest conservation priorities for sustaining natural resources for wildlife and people from the shores of the bay to the Upper Delaware.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Nicholas A. Tonelli

## Tools for different users

More than a map, *Nature's Network* offers a suite of decision-support tools representing five conservation approaches. Used together, or individually, these tools offer voluntary guidance to:

**Conserve the irreplaceable** – The best place to start strategic conservation is to identify a network of connected, intact, and resilient areas encompassing various types of lands and waters representing important habitats for key species. These are priority places for future sustainable human and natural communities in the Delaware River Basin.

**Make better decisions for the future** – Guidance that reflects projections about how land use and environmental changes will affect natural resources over time can help us safeguard today's investments in conservation for future generations.

**Maximize limited resources** – Conservation agencies and organizations have limited time and money to invest in protecting natural resources that wildlife and people depend upon. Guidance grounded in science and supported through regional collaboration allows more efficient use of limited resources in the face of complex environmental threats.

**Support local priorities with regional perspective** – Seeing how local conservation efforts fit into the bigger regional picture can help connect local, state and regional priorities. By zooming out, practitioners working at any scale can discover new opportunities that warrant a closer look.

**Find opportunities to work together** – Sustaining fish, wildlife, and natural resources in the face of increasing threats is beyond the scope of any single agency. With the benefit of consistent regional information, partners can look across state borders for opportunities to work together towards shared conservation goals at scales that matter for wildlife and people in the Delaware River Basin.

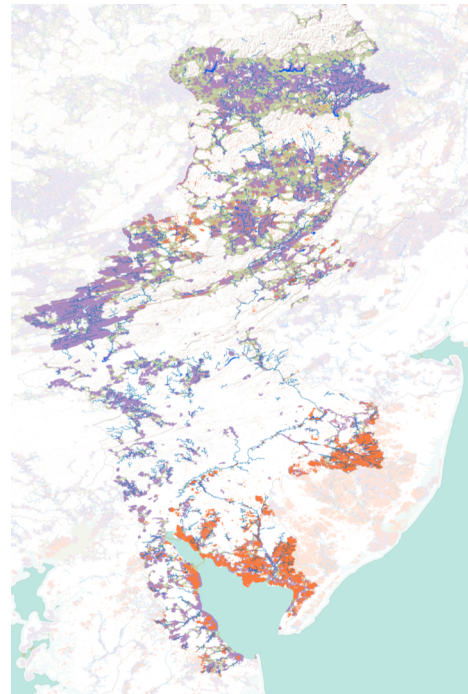
**To see where you fit into Nature's Network visit:**

[www.naturesnetwork.org](http://www.naturesnetwork.org)

**For more information contact:**

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You can look at the big picture with the *Nature's Network* conservation design, which combines numerous datasets to highlight conservation priority areas across the region, or explore individual datasets and tools representing five different conservation approaches.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



*Nature's Network* incorporates habitat needs for hundreds of species of fish, wildlife, and plants, including those identified as Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) in Wildlife Action Plans, like bog turtle and red knot.