



DELAWARE RIVER PROGRAM

Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund

2022 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, March 31st 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to conserve, restore, and connect people with fish and wildlife habitat in the Delaware River watershed. The Delaware River Program will award matching grants of \$75,000 to \$1,500,000 each to conserve, restore and protect habitats on public and private land 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. Approximately \$14 million in grant funding is available. Major funding for the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF) is provided by the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service with additional funding from AstraZeneca.

In 2022, NFWF’s Delaware River Program will award grants through two distinct Requests for Proposals: Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF) and Delaware River Restoration Fund (DRRF). While these funding opportunities are both concurrent and complementary parts of the Delaware River Program, for simplicity, the programs will use separate RFPs and applicants for the DRRF should utilize the DRRF RFP. There are three primary categories of DWCF grants included in this RFP.

DWCF Conservation Action Grants, Capacity Building Grants and Nature-Based Solutions Grants will be awarded to nonprofit 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 Partnership and Program [Framework](#) to: sustain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat; improve and maintain water quality for fish, wildlife and people; sustain and enhance water management to benefit fish and wildlife; and improve outdoor recreational opportunities. To address these goals, projects, which may be located anywhere within the Delaware River watershed, must employ one or more of the strategies described in the Program Priorities section below.



GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS



All Delaware River Program projects must be implemented entirely within the Delaware River watershed, which includes portions of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware.

Organizations located outside the watershed may apply if the project will be conducted entirely within the watershed.

Applicants for DWCF Conservation Action Grant funding are strongly encouraged to use Nature's Network to help guide and refine proposals for project delivery. Please see the detailed map [at this link](#) for information on Nature's Network in the Delaware Watershed.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must clearly address how projects for which funds are requested will directly and measurably contribute to the accomplishment of program priorities enumerated below. For 2022, the Delaware River Program seeks proposals that

address the following program priorities:

DWCF Conservation Action Grants

DWCF applicants should propose conservation and restoration implementation projects that will address one or more Delaware River Basin Restoration Partnership and Program Framework *Strategic Program Areas* (listed below). Projects should also incorporate one or more *Cross-Program Activities* outlined in the Framework: engage and equip the public to support coordinated restoration and protection; facilitate resiliency of natural systems; increase scientific knowledge, monitoring and research needed for successful project implementation; provide technical assistance for restoration and conservation; conserve areas of regional significance in the Delaware River Watershed. For additional information on DWCF program goals, strategies and activities, please refer to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Delaware River Basin Restoration Program website for the Delaware River Basin Restoration Partnership and Program [Framework](#). Applicants are also strongly encouraged to reference NFWF's Delaware River Watershed [Business Plan](#) for opportunities to enhance project competitiveness by linking Business Plan strategies and work in focal areas for priority species with Framework Strategic Program Areas whenever possible.

Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes ensuring traditional knowledge elevation. Additionally, projects should engage community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) to help design, implement, and maintain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award.

NEW: Limited funding is available to facilitate and contribute to conservation easement and acquisition projects that protect existing, high-quality fish and wildlife habitat in the Delaware watershed—particularly for those priority species listed to the right. Requests for land protection funding may include transaction and project management costs, such as surveys, appraisal, environmental report, etc., and easement, acquisition, or protection costs. Projects should prioritize and enable public access and recreational opportunities and should clearly support or facilitate additional Strategic Program Areas below.

Priority for Conservation Action Grants will be given to projects that collaboratively address one or more of the *Strategic Program Areas*.

1. **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 densely forested headwater streams in the upper basin to the bayshores of the estuary. The program will support projects that conserve and restore ecological function to the important habitats for which the fish and wildlife resources in the basin depend. Conservation and restoration of these habitats will result in ecological, recreational, and commercial benefits. Projects that advance the Delaware River Watershed Business Plan strategies within priority focal areas are encouraged.
2. **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 15 million people rely on the water from the Delaware River and tributaries for their drinking water needs. The river also supports a diverse suite of fish and wildlife that depends on high quality water in the river. Projects should coordinate with existing regulatory activities but will focus on non-regulatory efforts to provide additional focus on habitat protection and conservation activities with the objective to protect water quality for both drinking water and the health of the fish and wildlife resources that depend on clean water. Please see the DWCF Nature-Based Solutions Grants section for more information on green stormwater infrastructure in the DWCF.
3. **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. Managing water use for drinking water needs and human uses while still providing water to support fish and wildlife can be challenging. Projects should coordinate with existing regulatory activities but focus on non-regulatory efforts to support demands on water resources of the basin and enhance tolerance of potential drought and flood conditions.

DWCF projects that address listed and at-risk species needs, or [NFWF business plan](#) priority species will be considered more competitive:

NFWF Priority species

- Eastern brook trout
- Alosine species –
- American shad, river herring
- Golden-winged warbler
- Wood thrush
- Cerulean warbler
- Red knot

ESA species

- Red knot
- Bog turtle
- Black rail
- Dwarf wedgemussel

At-risk species

- Birds
 - Saltmarsh sparrow
 - American oystercatcher
 - Ruddy turnstone
 - Whimbrel
 - Eastern whip-poor-will
- Freshwater mussels
 - Brook floater
 - Green floater
 - Tidewater mucket
 - Yellow lampmussel
- Insects & Pollinators
 - Native bumblebees
 - Monarch butterfly
 - Frosted elfin
 - Septima’s Clubtail
- Turtles
 - Spotted turtle
 - Wood turtle

Please see the Evaluation Criteria section below for more information on including at-risk species in your proposal.

- 4. 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. Projects should support high-quality recreational experiences in the basin, including boating, hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, wildlife viewing and birding, thus providing public access and an economic benefit to the watershed.

DWCF Incubation and Investment - NFWF is making available \$1 million under the Conservation Action Grants for projects that enable the DWCF to support high-performing science and innovation concepts. Projects should have significant potential to transform the Delaware River watershed's future in areas including conservation and restoration action, diversity and inclusion, monitoring, research and public access.

Incubation and Investment grants will be awarded to 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, and enhance direct community engagement and experience in nature.

Projects should seek to build proof of concept and are strongly encouraged to include assessment and evaluation to draw meaningful conclusions about efficacy and to include robust documentation of results to enhance transferability and utility.

NEW: DWCF Capacity-Building Grants

NFWF is making available \$2 million for DWCF projects with the intended purpose of building capacity among grantees and partners working to improve fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature in the Delaware River watershed. 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 and diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) in conservation, 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.

NEW: DWCF Nature-Based Solutions Grants

This year, the DWCF will include additional funds made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Approximately \$4.5 million is available for nature-based infrastructure projects that improve habitat, enhance resilience, and directly engage communities. Nature-based solutions

RETURNING in 2022: Call for Tree Planting Projects

Through a partnership with AstraZeneca, NFWF is seeking DWCF projects that include a significant element of tree planting. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit proposals with projects utilizing robust riparian buffer plantings, urban and suburban canopy expansion, reforestation and afforestation, and other tree planting practices for improved habitat and water quality. Applicants seeking to take advantage of these new funds should use the metric for number of trees planted in addition to other appropriate metrics. Please contact program staff with any questions.

are projects that deliver natural and “green” infrastructure to protect, sustainably manage, and restore ecosystems to address community challenges, such as climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience. These projects concurrently benefit human and habitat well-being. Nature based solutions may reduce exposure of local communities and important infrastructure from hazards such as sea level rise, storm surge, and increased precipitation and flooding associated with storm events. These projects also allow natural adaptation, so that infrastructure and habitats remain resilient and sustainable in a changing climate.

The program will prioritize investments in nature-based solutions that restore or expand natural features such as coastal marshes and wetlands, dune and beach systems, oyster reefs, forests, floodplains, and buffers which minimize the impacts of storms and other naturally occurring events on nearby communities. The DWCF will fund planning, design, and restoration of natural infrastructure to help protect communities and enhance habitat for fish and wildlife. The DWCF will fund two types of nature-based solutions:

Natural infrastructure – Projects that use existing or restored natural landscapes (i.e., forests, floodplains, and wetlands) to increase resilience to climate impacts, often resulting in environmental, economic, and social co-benefits.

Green infrastructure – Projects that combine gray infrastructure with nature-based solutions to create hybrid systems that improve habitat and resilience to climate impacts, while also often resulting in environmental, economic, and social co-benefits. Generally, green infrastructure is a built or engineered solution that mimics ecosystem function.

Projects should address DWCF Strategic Program Areas and Cross-Program Activities in the Framework and should directly engage impacted communities. ***Priority will be given to projects that were developed through community input and co-design processes.*** Projects—especially those implemented in underserved, under-resourced or overburdened communities—should engage community-level partners to help design, implement, and sustain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities. Projects must also include plans and methods to engage and inform the public about the project’s benefits and use opportunities (see Evaluation Criteria – Community Impact and Engagement for more details).

Match leniency may be available to high priority projects that directly engage communities and/or benefit an underserved community but cannot meet the minimum match requirement. Applicants may be permitted to submit applications with a reduced nonfederal match ratio and are encouraged to reach out to NFWF program staff for guidance related to match.

Projects in geographies that are legally required under existing state or federal consent decrees or regulations—especially urban and suburban green stormwater infrastructure projects—should demonstrate an effort to go above and beyond minimum legal compliance, promoting or accelerating innovative and transformative practices benefitting both stormwater management and fish and wildlife habitat. *GSI projects should be high-impact and primarily benefit fish and wildlife habitat.*

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. We ask applicants to select only the most relevant metrics for the project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). To

increase consistency in the usage and calculations of metrics, the NFWF Delaware team created a [2022 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 instructions listed in the Metrics Guidance. If you believe an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Sydney Godbey (sydney.godbey@nfwf.org).

HABITAT RESTORATION		
Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Beach habitat quality improvements	Miles restored	Enter the number of miles of restored or protected beach/shoreline habitat; do not double count with erosion/acres restored. In the NOTES, indicate whether vegetation is being planted.
Erosion control	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored; enter specific type of coastal/shoreline habitat and restoration in NOTES section
Fish passage improvements	# barriers rectified	Enter the number of fish passage barriers rectified; enter species benefitting in NOTES section; if improving or increasing eastern brook trout patch sizes, specify in NOTES section
Fish passage improvements	Miles of stream opened	Enter the number of miles of stream opened to improve aquatic habitat connectivity; if Lake or Pond specify in NOTES section; if improving or increasing eastern brook trout patch sizes, specify in NOTES
Floodplain restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of floodplain acres restored. In the NOTES, indicate the % of vegetation on the pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%) and the dominant vegetation being restored (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Swamp).
Instream restoration	Miles restored	Enter the number of miles restored; briefly indicate the type of restoration in the NOTES section
Land, wetland restoration	# trees planted	Enter the number of trees planted and sustained (tree plantings that are urban/green infrastructure can also be included). In the NOTES section, specify the specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), # of acres, density per acre, and mortality rate. Do not include any additional trees planted to replace mortality in the numerical metric value.
Riparian restoration	Miles restored	Enter the number of riparian acres restored. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), the % of vegetation on the pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%), the dominant vegetation being planted (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Swamp), the buffer width, and the acres. DO NOT include instream restoration miles in this measurement.
Wetland restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored or enhanced. In the NOTES section, specify the dominant vegetation being planted (Marsh, Swamp). DO NOT include riparian or instream restoration miles in this measurement.
HABITAT MANAGEMENT		
Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
BMP implementation	Miles of stream with reduced and/or protected water temperature	Enter the number of stream miles with BMPS to reduce and/or protect water temperature. Use the NOTES section to describe the actual degree decrease (or maintenance) of temperature.
BMP implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of livestock fencing improved or installed	Enter miles of fencing and indicate type of improvements or if the fencing is new construction in the NOTES section.



BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Acres with BMPs	Enter number of acres; indicate the type of BMP(s) (e.g. manure storage, barnyard practices) and indicate method of calculating reduction in NOTES section. Please see the DWCF toolbox on the website for calculation resources. DO NOT include cover crops, conservation tillage, enhanced cropland nutrient management, or managed grazing.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Acres with cover crops	Enter the number of cropland acres with cover crops practices. Please describe the cover crop practices in the NOTES section.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Acres with conservation tillage	Enter the number of cropland acres with conservation tillage practices. Please describe conservation tillage practices in the NOTES section.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Acres with enhanced nutrient management	Enter the number of cropland acres with enhanced nutrient management practices other than or in addition to conservation tillage or cover crops. Please describe the nutrient management practices in the NOTES section.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Acres with managed grazing	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., promoting plant growth above and below ground, improving wildlife habitat, and maximizing soil carbon through a variety of grazing approaches). Please describe the grazing practices in the NOTES section.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Lbs N avoided (annually)	Enter the amount of nitrogen prevented from entering system annually and indicate method of calculating reduction in NOTES section
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Lbs P avoided (annually)	Enter the amount of phosphorous prevented from entering system annually and indicate method of calculating reduction in NOTES section
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Lbs sediment avoided (annually)	Enter the amount of sediment prevented from entering system annually and indicate method of calculating reduction in NOTES section
BMP implementation for prescribed burns	Acres burned	Enter the number of acres that have been treated by prescribed burning. In the NOTES section, specify whether it is private or public land, the average frequency (in years) at which prescribed burning is expected to occur in the future, the vegetation being burned (forest, shrubland, grassland, cropland, Phragmites marsh), and, if forest, whether trees have been planted in past 10 years (Yes, No), and the type of forest (Aspen-birch, Maple-beech-birch, Oak-hickory, Oak-pine).
BMP implementation for stormwater runoff	Acres with BMPs	Enter number of acres treated with stormwater BMP(s); indicate the type of BMP(s) (e.g., rain gardens, constructed wetlands, green roofs, rain barrels, etc.) and inches of rainfall that will be stored, infiltrated and/or filtered within a 48-hour rain event in NOTES section. Include method of calculation; please see the DWCF toolbox on the website for calculation resources
BMP implementation for stormwater runoff	Volume stormwater prevented	Enter the volume (in gallons) of stormwater prevented from entering the system per year; indicate type of BMP(s) in the NOTES section; include method of calculation. Please see the DWCF toolbox on the website for calculation resources.
BMP implementation to mitigate recreational disturbance	Miles with BMPs	Enter the number of miles with BMPs to mitigate recreational disturbance
Early successional forest - Improved mgmt. practices	Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres under improved management; use the NOTES section to indicate full parcel size benefitting from acres under management



Late successional forest - Improved mgmt. practices	Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres under improved management; use the NOTES section to indicate full parcel size benefitting from acres under management
Mature successional forest - Improved mgmt. practices	Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres under improved management; use the NOTES section to indicate full parcel size benefitting from acres under management
Improved management practices	Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres under improved management, enter type of land (i.e. public or private), and enter specific practice(s) in NOTES section; DO NOT double count with acres of BMPs and please reference the 2022 Metrics Guidance for more specific metric options for working lands projects (e.g. agriculture and forestry).
HABITAT CONSERVATION		
Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Acres protected under long term easement (permanent or >30-yr)	Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr). Assuming the specific parcel(s) has been identified, in the NOTES indicate what % of natural land cover would have been cleared in the absence of the easement(s).
Acres Acquired in fee	Acres acquired in fee	Enter the number of acres acquired in fee. Assuming the specific parcel(s) has been identified, in the NOTES indicate whether there was a competing offer (Yes/No) or potential zoning change (Yes/No), and what % of natural land cover would be cleared in the absence of the acquisition(s).
CAPACITY, OUTREACH, INCENTIVES		
Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Economic benefits	# jobs created	Enter the number of jobs created; indicate workforce targeted in NOTES section (e.g. youth, veterans, underserved communities)
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance	# people reached	Enter the number of people who responded to an offer and inquiry delivered by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities; specify the percentage of individuals reached; indicate type of audience (farmers, landowners, municipalities) in the NOTES section
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance	# people with changed behavior	Enter the number of individuals demonstrating a minimum level of behavior change; briefly describe method of measurement in NOTES section. Characterize the audience (farmers, landowners, municipalities) in the NOTES section
Public Access	# acres with public access	Enter the number of acres now open to public access as a result of the project; include any associated river or stream miles also opened to public access as a result of project
Volunteer participation	# volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers participating
PLANNING, RESEARCH, MONITORING		
Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Monitoring	# monitoring programs	Enter the number of monitoring programs established, underway or improved; describe what is being monitored in the NOTES section
Monitoring	# sites being monitored	Enter the number of streams/sites being monitored; briefly describe what is being monitored in NOTES section; include miles/acres/area covered by monitoring
Project Management	Acres with transaction costs and project mgmt activities addressed	Enter the number of acres for which conservation easements and acquisitions will be facilitated; for land protection project management activities, e.g. surveys, appraisal, environmental report
Research	Miles assessed	Enter the number of stream, river, beach or shoreline miles assessed; briefly describe the assessment aim in the NOTES section
Tool development for decision-making	# tools used by decision-makers	Enter the number of tools developed that are used by decision-makers; briefly describe the tool in the NOTES section

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- **DWCF Conservation Action Grants, Capacity-Building Grants, Nature-Based Solutions Grants**
 - ✓ 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.
- **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 into or renewing a contract) that uses 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.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

NFWF's Delaware River Program will award approximately \$14 million in grants via the DWCF in 2022. Generally, grants of less than \$250,000 will be awarded for restoration at a single site and/or involving fewer partners. Proposals requesting \$250,000 to \$1,500,000 should represent *broad-based partnerships engaged in implementing comprehensive restoration and conservation approaches* that may include multiple sites and multiple strategies. Grants will be awarded in three categories:

1. **DWCF Conservation Action Grants** will range from \$75,000 to \$1,500,000 each. Approximately \$8 million is available (with up to \$1,000,000 available for Incubation and Investment). These grants require a minimum matching contribution valued at 50% of *total* project costs (i.e., 1:1 match); grants in the higher end of the range are strongly encouraged to exceed 50% match to ensure competitiveness. Required minimum 1:1 match must be from non-federal sources. Voluntary additional match beyond the 1:1 requirement may be from either federal or non-federal sources. Should an applicant encounter significant challenges

meeting the 1:1 nonfederal requirement, they are encouraged to contact NFWF or FWS program staff to discuss options. Projects must be ready to begin implementation within six months of the grant award and completed within two years of award.

2. **DWCF Capacity-Building Grants** will range from \$75,000 to \$500,000 each. Approximately \$2 million is available. These grants require a minimum matching contribution valued at 20% of *total* project costs (e.g. a \$100,000 project would include \$20,000 in nonfederal match and an \$80,000 NFWF DWCF request). Required minimum match must be from non-federal sources. Voluntary additional match beyond the requirement may be from either federal or non-federal sources. Should an applicant encounter significant challenges meeting the nonfederal requirement, they are encouraged to contact NFWF or FWS program staff to discuss options. Projects must be ready to begin implementation within six months of the grant award and completed within two years of award.
3. **DWCF Nature-Based Solutions Grants** will range from \$75,000 to \$1,500,000 each. Approximately \$4.5 million is available. These grants require a minimum matching contribution valued at 50% of *total* project costs (i.e., 1:1 match); grants in the higher end of the range are strongly encouraged to exceed 50% match to ensure competitiveness. Required minimum 1:1 match must be from non-federal sources. Voluntary additional match beyond the 1:1 requirement may be from either federal or non-federal sources. Should an applicant encounter significant challenges meeting the 1:1 nonfederal requirement, they are encouraged to contact NFWF or FWS program staff to discuss options. Projects must be ready to begin implementation within six months of the grant award and completed within two years of award.

Applicants may only submit a project to one of the above funding categories (e.g. an applicant cannot use the same project or components of the project to apply concurrently for a Conservation Action Grant and Nature-Based Solutions Grant).

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source [policies](#). Proposals will then be evaluated on the extent to which they meet the following criteria:

Technical Merit – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal relies on sound methods relative to a realistic budget to achieve success. Project engages appropriate technical experts (or includes expert staff) throughout project planning, design, and implementation. Project outcomes are reasonable and measurable.

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.

Metrics – Proposal includes specific, quantifiable performance metrics. Proposal includes requested details and justifications in the metrics NOTES section. Project performance metrics are distinguished from, and contribute to, ecological and social outcome metrics (e.g. water quality improvements, sustainable species population measures, ecological integrity/resilience indices, landscape permeability, community resilience index, outdoor activity participation/volunteer measures, etc.).

Program Goals and Strategies – Reviewers will refer to the Delaware River Basin Restoration Partnership and Program [Framework](#) to assess project relevance to Program goals and strategies. Project substantially and expeditiously contributes to on-the-ground habitat restoration and conservation goals and priorities outlined above; project addresses one or more of the Strategic Program Areas. Proposal clearly states which strategies the project will address.

Cross-Program Activities – Proposals clearly state how one or more Cross-Program Activities are incorporated into project. Highly competitive proposals will address multiple Cross-Program Activities. Context is provided for need, objectives, expected outcomes and measuring success of Cross-Program Activities.

Project Context – 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). Proposal notes any risk factors which 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 River Program 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.
- [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. Applicants can apply this tool in the Delaware River Watershed to see how local

conservation efforts fit into the bigger picture. That broader perspective can amplify local, state and regional conservation priorities by illustrating their significance on a landscape scale. In turn, by complementing regional priorities, projects can make an impact beyond the watershed boundary by supporting the long-term viability of fish and wildlife species across their ranges.

- At-risk species (ARS) are plants or animals being considered for listing as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Applicants addressing at-risk species needs via their proposals should reference the Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (NEAFWA), Northeast Region State Wildlife Action Plan database (<https://www.neafwa.org/swap-database.html>) or other plans to ensure that the conservation actions proposed are listed as needed or warranted for the at-risk specie being conserved. Applicants addressing Endangered Species Act listed species should reference the specific species recovery plan (<https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/species-with-recovery-plans>) to ensure proposed actions are consistent with recommended recovery actions. Provide narrative, with citations, as to how the completed activities will contribute toward the improved conservation of the ARS.

Work Plan – The applicant provides a detailed work plan with clear activities, roles (including partner roles), timeline and outcomes for the project. The work plan can be used to assess project progress. Work plan also notes if and how project will be maintained in the long-term, and by whom.

Monitoring and Project Evaluation – Project includes a plan for monitoring project effectiveness at meeting goals and objectives (outcomes) during and after the proposed project period. Applicant includes an approach to adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise during the grant period. Applicant describes how resources will be used to implement the plan, and to continue evaluating project success.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Partnership – Project is supported by, and will be delivered by, a strong partnership that leverages additional skills and resources, and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Proposed partners and roles—including short- and long-term—are clearly identified (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant). A project partner is any community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, interstate and federal government agency that contributes time and/or funding to support project planning, design and/or implementation. Proposals requesting more than \$250,000 should include a broader, more robust project partnership.

Community Impact and Engagement – The applicant partners and engages collaboratively with diverse 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. Non-traditional partners or communities are directly enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project and equity is carefully considered in project design. Priority will be given to projects that benefit and engage underserved or traditionally excluded communities. The applicant describes community characteristics of the project area, identifies any communities impacted, describes outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored



and measured. Demographic data is included to support descriptions and proposal includes letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed. Projects are strongly encouraged to submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

Letters of Support – Proposal includes letters of support from project partners, stakeholders, contributors and/or technical assistance providers; letters should describe any match or contribution offered to the project and confirm partner roles. Proposal includes landowner or site manager support, acknowledgements or permissions (e.g. certifying site access). Letters of support are strongly encouraged; see the [tip sheet](#) and [Letters of Support Best Practices](#) for additional guidance.

Transferability – Project has potential and a plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities, practitioners or to be integrated into government programs and policies. Proposal notes the demonstration value of the project if relevant.

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. The value of land protection activities, including easements or acquired parcels is eligible. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review. Federal funding requires a 1:1 non-federal match (with the exception of Capacity Building grants). Voluntary additional match beyond the 1:1 requirement may be from either federal or non-federal sources.

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 (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, 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 (link below) for more information.

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.

Applicant Demographic Information – In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic information on applicants and their communities via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers. For more details, please see the [tip sheet](#) and the Uploads section of Easygrants.

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 Applicant Webinar (Register)	Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022, 10:00AM, EST
Proposal Tools Webinar (Register)	Wednesday, March 2, 2022, 11:00AM, EST
Full Proposal Due Date	March 31, 2022, 11:59pm, EST
Review Period	April – May 2022
Awards Announced	Mid-August, 2022

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through 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. 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 Resources](#)

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:

Rachel Dawson – Program Director, Delaware River
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Sydney Godbey – Manager, Northeastern Region
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Erin Lewis – Coordinator, Northeast Regional Programs
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Field liaisons are available to provide application assistance, guidance and troubleshooting for DWCF projects. Please reach out to NFWF staff for more information on or access to this free technical assistance. Additionally, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in collaboration with NFWF and Cardno, will be holding a **virtual proposal lab** for the 2022 RFP on Thursday afternoons from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. The lab 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 complete this [lab appointment request form](#). 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.

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

Easygrants Helpdesk
Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail: 202-595-2497



NFWF

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.