Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund
2022-2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar [Register Here]: **Thursday, August 4, 2022 1:00 to 2:00 PM Eastern Time**
Pre-Proposal Due Date: **Tuesday, August 30, 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**
Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, November 3, 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

Recognizing the need for a coordinated, public-private approach to addressing the stormwater, habitat and public-use issues in the Southeast Michigan region, seven corporate, foundation and government funders have joined together to create the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund (Fund). The Fund will award grants to help increase the resilience of communities and natural resources in Southeast Michigan by reducing the impact of stormwater, improving water quality, enhancing habitat, and increasing the accessibility and usability of public green space and natural areas. Grants will be awarded in two categories: 1) expanding green stormwater infrastructure and enhancing public space and 2) improving habitat quality, connectivity and accessibility.

Approximately **$1.7 million** is expected to be available for grant awards. Individual grants typically range from $150,000 to $350,000. **Pre-proposals must be submitted online** (easygrants.nfwf.org) **by August 30, 2022, 11:59 PM Eastern Time**.

Administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the Fund is public-private partnership among Cleveland-Cliffs, the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the USDA Forest Service.

The Fund was created to provide financial resources that benefit Southeast Michigan communities and wildlife habitats by improving resilience in the face of intensifying environmental stressors related to climate change, development, invasive species, nonpoint source pollution and other factors. By investing in green stormwater infrastructure solutions, the Fund seeks to reduce flooding and other intensifying threats associated with major storm events, while also creating safe, dynamic, and enjoyable public green spaces that improve habitat values for wildlife and quality of life for residents. By restoring the region's unique natural areas, the Fund seeks to enhance the quality and connectivity of habitat for wildlife, improve the ability of these habitats to withstand and absorb the impact of environmental stressors, and make nature more accessible for people.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

To be eligible for funding, projects must be located within the seven-county region of Southeast Michigan including St. Clair, Macomb, Oakland, Wayne, Washtenaw, Livingston, and Monroe counties (depicted geographically in the map below). Additionally, priority will be given to projects that directly benefit and engage low-income communities and communities of color. Projects that are not located in or meaningfully benefit these communities will be less competitive.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Fund will award grants in the following categories:

1. Expanding Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Enhancing Public Space

2. Improving Habitat Quality and Connectivity and Enhancing Public Space

Each applicant will need to identify one primary category that best describes the proposed project. If a project is expected to yield benefits in both categories, an applicant may also identify a

secondary category. Competitive proposals will deliver environmental and social impact, improving habitat, green infrastructure and equitable public access to greenspace while benefiting low-income communities and communities of color. The following sections provide more information on the two funding categories.

Funding Category 1: Expanding Green Stormwater Infrastructure and Enhancing Public Space
Funding in this category will support green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) projects that improve stormwater capture and storage to mitigate the impacts of climate change, including reducing runoff, combined sewer overflows, basement backups, and flooding through nature-based design. Much of the region is covered in impervious surfaces and these threats pose significant risks to communities, with disproportionately severe impacts to low-income communities and communities of color. GSI projects should utilize natural design elements to reduce and treat stormwater where it falls while delivering environmental, social and community benefits. Proposed GSI projects must be designed with a dual purpose, to increase stormwater storage capacity while also enhancing the quality of, access to, and/or use of community green space or natural areas.

Projects seeking funding in this category will install new GSI and/or improve and maintain the function of existing GSI installations. All projects must add or maintain a minimum of 50,000 cumulative gallons of stormwater storage capacity per year to be competitive. GSI project activities may include, but are not limited to, the installation or maintenance of any of the following practices: stormwater wetlands, rain gardens, targeted tree planting, bioswales, pervious surfaces, etc. This year, dedicated funding will be available to support projects that focus on tree planting and enhancing urban forests in underserved communities. Competitive GSI proposals will focus the majority of the on-the-ground work on installing and/or maintaining GSI practices that are predominantly vegetative or green, with an emphasis on nature-based design. If projects incorporate structural GSI elements, such as pervious pavement, cisterns, subsurface detention, green roofs, etc. these elements will need to compliment GSI practices that focus on natural vegetative solutions, such as rain gardens. Proposals should also incorporate activities designed to enhance public green space which may include but are not limited to, installing or enhancing trails or paths, passive and/or active recreational opportunities such as benches or play areas with pervious surfaces, community or shared gardens, educational signage, pollinator gardens etc.

Preference will be given to projects of sufficient size and scope to significantly reduce runoff and contaminant discharge (i.e., reduction of nutrients, pollution, and sediment) and increase GSI function at a regional or significant scale (more than 50,000 gallons stormwater storage/year). Proposals seeking funds for improvements to existing GSI projects should outline their authority to access and maintain those sites. Projects that do not include enhancements to public green space or public access will not be considered for funding.

Small, isolated projects (e.g., rain barrels, cisterns, a single parking lot, etc.) without a connection to a larger green infrastructure plan or suite of proposed installations will not be competitive. Proposals are encouraged to utilize native or non-invasive, urban-adapted plant and tree species designed to improve habitat for pollinators and other native wildlife or diversify and sustain the urban canopy. Applicants must include a maintenance plan (see Long-term Operation, Maintenance and Monitoring section) and are encouraged to build in training/capacity needs to maintain

infrastructure after the life of the grant. Preference will be given to projects that align with GSI and/or community plans, municipal sustainability, climate resilience, open space plans or approved watershed management plans (see Evaluation Criteria section for more detail).

All applications proposing new GSI installations must report anticipated outcomes in terms of gallons of stormwater storage added annually (design retention capacity) . Applications proposing GSI maintenance or enhancement must report anticipated outcomes in terms of gallons of stormwater storage capacity (gallons/year). gallons/year) when GSI functions optimally as a result of maintenance activities. Applicants are encouraged to use the EPA stormwater calculator tool, found by clicking here: https://www.epa.gov/water-research/national-stormwater-calculator, to estimate design retention capacity. For tree planting projects, applicants are encouraged to use i-Tree, found by clicking here: https://planting.itreetools.org/, to calculate gallons of storm water taken up annually by tree planting (use a 20-year tree age for measuring stormwater benefits in i-Tree). To inform selections of native or non-invasive, urban-adapted plants and tree species for GSI installations, consider the following references: SEMCOG Low Impact Development Manual; MSU native plant guide.

Funding Category 2: Improving Habitat Quality, Connectivity and Enhancing Public Space
Funding in this category will support habitat restoration projects, including in-stream, riparian, upland, and wetland habitat, that improve the quality and connectivity of habitats throughout Southeast Michigan. Habitat projects must be designed to restore habitat while also meaningfully improving public access to and/or use-opportunities of natural areas throughout the region.

Projects seeking funding in this category will restore habitats throughout Southeast Michigan to achieve a range of ecological benefits, such as improving water quality in waterways and the Great Lakes, reducing erosion, increasing the complexity, connectivity and quality of habitat, benefiting species of concern, and enhancing biodiversity and supporting healthy populations of native species. Habitat project activities may include, but are not limited to, creation/restoration of pollinator habitat, streambank stabilization, invasive species control, native plant restoration, construction of in-stream structures to improve geomorphological processes and habitat for fish and aquatic organisms. Proposals should also incorporate activities designed to increase connectivity between natural areas and habitats, such as restoring contiguous habitats or parcels adjacent to protected and/or restored natural areas, connecting natural areas via trail systems, greenways, etc., and restoring habitat in strategic locations to provide more ecologically significant and improved access to critical habitats for target species (e.g., brook trout, northern pike, lesser yellow legs and other migratory and marsh-nesting birds). See the Great Lake Business Plan for additional program priority details. Proposals must improve public access and use of natural areas, which may include construction of trails, public access points, and infrastructure enabling use of waterways and habitats, such as paddle craft launches, wildlife viewing areas, education and community engagement activities, etc.

Projects that do not include enhancements to public green space to and/or improve access to or use of natural areas will not be considered for funding. Preference will be given to projects designed to improve habitat for multiple species of conservation concern. Small, isolated projects lacking strategic relevance for priority species, regional habitat connectivity, or restoration of rare or critical habitats will not be competitive.

PROGRAM FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR ALL FUNDING CATEGORIES

Equity and Inclusion
The Fund desires to support projects that meaningfully engage and benefit low-income and communities of color. The Fund recognizes that these communities are often disproportionately impacted by climate change and associated environmental issues of special concern for the Fund, including stormwater runoff, combined sewer overflows and associated flooding and access to safe public greenspace and natural areas. The Fund will prioritize investments that seek to address these impacts while also meaningfully engaging communities to achieve benefits for the environment and people.

Priority will be given to projects that meaningfully and directly engage communities in their ideation, design, implementation, and/or long-term maintenance and sustainability. Examples of direct community engagement may include, but are not limited to:
- community has direct input into the project design and implementation, project empowers community with knowledge or decision-making authority
- project team represents and is a part of the community being engaged, community is engaged through specific
- active engagement strategies such as: workshops, classroom activities, field trips and volunteer opportunities, etc.
- project addresses a specific and localized harm such as flooding, project creates jobs in the target community or performs job training as a direct outcome of project activities
- project directly engages in specific cultural activities with the community.

Additionally, applicants should plan to report on their approach to tracking and measuring qualitative, diversity, equity and inclusion benefits of the project in the full proposal narrative portion of the application. These outcomes can include but are not limited to measuring the benefits of proposed work on increasing land value, improved access to greenspace and public recreation opportunities, reduction in basement backups and neighborhood flooding, reduction of heat island effect, jobs added or sustained etc. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate tools, such as the Social Vulnerability Index and others, to provide context. Projects receiving awards from the Fund will be asked to report on these outcomes and project-related benefits to low-income communities and communities of color in their annual programmatic reports to NFWF.

Monitoring and Long-Term Maintenance
To help ensure project benefits will be sustained through time, grantees will be required to present or develop plans that clearly address the project site's operation and management for at least five (5) years after project completion. The plans should describe anticipated actions needed (maintenance schedules and tasks to be completed at scheduled intervals), access to or ownership of equipment needed to maintain project sites, cost estimates, sources of funding to support long-term maintenance plan, long-term partners, parties responsible for implementation and oversight, training needs, and the applicant's and partners' capacity for long-term stewardship of the project site. If applicable, the plan should also describe long-term invasive species management and early detection rapid response (EDRR) protocol. A portion of individual grant awards may be used to

support this plan development, and plans must be completed prior to the end dates specified in individual grant agreements.

Applicants are encouraged to direct a portion of requested grant funding to support monitoring activities within the proposed grant period if relevant to the metrics being reported. If you are considering incorporating monitoring into the project and will be requesting funding to support those activities, please contact aislinn.gauchay@nfwf.org for guidance on building this into your proposal and budget.

METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund has a list of metrics in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible metrics are shown in the table below). *Additional guidance to assist applicants in selecting and reporting metrics and project outcomes is available at https://www.nfwf.org/semichigan.* All grantees should review this document when selecting metrics as a part of their Easygrants application. If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Aislinn Gauchay aislinn.gauchay@nfwf.org to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metrics *Required metric	Additional Guidance
Expanding Green Stormwater Infrastructure	*Volume stormwater storage added	Enter the volume (in gallons) of stormwater storage retained annually through green infrastructure improvements (measured as design retention capacity for a 100-year 24-hour storm). For GSI maintenance/improvement projects, enter volume (in gallons) of stormwater storage preserved annually through GSI maintenance and/or improvements. In the NOTES, include the methodology for calculating annual stormwater storage.
	Square feet of green infrastructure	Enter the square footage of green infrastructure installed
	# of trees planted	Enter # of trees planted. In the NOTES, 1) include the size (diameter) and species of trees planted and 2) specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), # of acres, forest type planted (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, swamp-- either broadleaf or conifer, shrub), density per acre, and mortality rate.
Enhancing Habitat Quality	Riparian restoration - miles restored	Enter the number of riparian miles restored, including riparian buffers. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland), the dominant

		vegetation being planted (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp), and the average width of the riparian buffer. Indicate the miles of riparian habitat restored along priority waterways. Include miles of invasive species control, bank stabilization, and native vegetation restoration.
	Instream restoration - miles restored	Enter the number of miles restored
	Instream restoration - # structures installed	Enter the number of habitat structures installed, replaced, upgraded or repaired
	# passage barriers rectified	Enter number of barriers to aquatic connectivity removed, remediated, or improved
	Miles of stream opened	Enter the number of stream miles opened. This should include the miles of upstream habitat until the next barrier upstream (or end of flowline) as well as the miles of downstream habitat until the next barrier downstream (or large water body, such as a lake). This estimate should include both the mainstem of the stream or river and smaller tributaries.
	Wetland restoration - Acres restored	Enter # acres of WETLAND (not riparian or instream) habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (Marsh, Tidal marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp) and indicate % of vegetation on pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%).
	Removal of Invasives - Acres restored	Enter # acres of invasives removed (this will be a subset of restoration acres; non-cumulative with other acre restoration metrics). In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Forest understory, Junipers, Shrubs, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), desired dominant vegetation (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Swamp), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
	Pounds sediment avoided (annually)	Enter the amount of sediment prevented from entering system annually. In the NOTES, please indicate the model or method used to calculate this metric.
	Pounds phosphorus prevented from entering (annually)	Enter the amount of phosphorous prevented from entering system annually. In the NOTES, please

		indicate the model or method used to calculate this metric.
	Pounds nitrogen prevented from entering (annually)	Enter the amount of nitrogen prevented from entering system annually. In the NOTES, please indicate the model or method used to calculate this metric.
Improving Public Access & Community Engagement *(All proposals should select at least two of these metrics.)*	Infrastructure - acres of greenspace	Enter the acres of neighborhood green space and habitat created or improved
	Infrastructure - miles trails developed/improved	Enter the number of miles of trails or river walks developed or improved
	Infrastructure - access pts developed/improved	Enter the number of public access points developed/improved
	# of volunteer hours	Enter the # of volunteer hours in this project
	# jobs sustained	Provide number of jobs continued or sustained through the grant. Jobs should be directly engaged in project activities, exist prior to the grant period, and be sustained beyond the end of the grant.
	# jobs created	Provide number of individuals hired by organization or contractor directly working on the project (non-volunteers) during the project period. This reflects the addition of new jobs to the local and regional economy as the result of the work proposed in the grant.
	# people reached	Provide total number of people reached by grant activities throughout the period of performance. People reached should reflect the number of community members (volunteers, local groups, residents) meaningfully engaged in the project design, implementation, or who utilize the project's on-the-ground assets post-implementation. If the applicant will be measuring public use of grant investments post-implementation, in the NOTES, please indicate the method of measurement to validate the use estimate (e.g., trail counters, volunteer observations, etc.)

Equity and Inclusion Reporting

Additionally, applicants should plan to report on their approach to tracking and measuring qualitative, long-term diversity, equity and inclusion outcomes in the full proposal application narrative. These outcomes can include but are not limited to measuring the benefits of proposed work on increasing land value, improved access to greenspace and public recreation opportunities, reduction in basement backups and neighborhood flooding, reduction of heat island effect, jobs added or sustained etc. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate tools, such as the Social

[Vulnerability Index] and others, to estimate and measure such outcomes. Applicants should include a description of how they estimated these outcomes and how they will measure or track the project's impact as the work progresses in the application full proposal narrative. Additionally, projects receiving awards from the Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund will be asked to report on these outcomes and project-related benefits to low-income communities and communities of color in their programmatic reports to NFWF.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities
- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, tribal governments and organizations, and educational institutions. To be competitive, applicant organizations must demonstrate capacity and experience commensurate with the scale or complexity of the project being proposed and the funding being requested. If the applicant is a government entity or municipality, close partnership with at least one non-profit and/or community organization is required for projects to be competitive.

- Ineligible applicants include federal government agencies, unincorporated individuals, and for-profit businesses. While these entities may not be the primary recipient of grant funds, they may be partners or contractors.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds
- **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.

- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.

- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY, GRANT DURATION AND MATCH

Approximately **$1.7 million** is expected to be available for grant awards annually. Individual grants typically range from **$150,000 to $350,000**. Projects should apply the bulk (>70%) of grant funding to on-the-ground work. Applicants are highly encouraged to apply the remainder of grant funding requested to support activities with significant strategic value, such as community engagement/outreach, education, operations and maintenance, monitoring and evaluation, etc.

Anticipated completion time for funded projects will typically be two years following finalization of a grant agreement. The standard grant period may include a third year in cases with a demonstrated need for additional time to complete critical project activities including but not limited to, final design or engineering, project establishment or maintenance, community engagement/outreach, or monitoring. The project narrative should include a clear timetable or schedule for project completion. Project start and end dates should define the period during which all proposed work is accomplished, all requested funds are spent, and all matching funds are spent or applied. The start date indicated in an application should not precede March 13, 2023.

The ratio of matching contributions offered to grant funding requested is one criterion considered during the review process. Match is not required. However, providing some match (non-federal and federal) is encouraged to demonstrate broad support for the project and overall impact of the work. Match can be any combination of in cash and/or in-kind goods and services (for example external/partner services, volunteers or grantee in-kind, materials and services donated, etc.) or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. No priority will be given to higher cash percentages versus other sources of match. In addition, eligible indirect costs (that would not be paid with requested grant funding) may be applied as match. More information about using indirect costs as match can be found by clicking here. Full information on how to document match, including a description of acceptable sources of match, is available at http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/faqs.aspx.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. The Southeast Michigan Resilience Fund advisory team, comprised of the Fund's administrators and funding partners, and a panel of technical reviewers, comprised of subject-matter experts and key stakeholders from state agencies, communities, academia etc., will use the following criteria as a strong basis for project selections. Project selections may also be based on other considerations, such as availability of funding, geographic distribution of projects, and balance among project types and grant size.

Strategic Value
Fund partners will consider the following criteria, listed in order of relative importance, when reviewing proposals and determining which will receive grant funding. Note that this list is not necessarily comprehensive of all factors that considered when reviewing proposals and some criteria might be weighted more heavily than others on a case-by-case project basis.

- **Program Goals and Priorities:** Project contributes to the program's overall goals for green stormwater infrastructure, habitat restoration, enhancing public space, engaging

communities and equity and inclusion. Project has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities.

- **Technical Merit and Budget**: Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan, timeline for implementation and budget. Budget is clear, detailed, cost-effective (see Implementation section below) and appropriate for work proposed. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design implementation and maintenance.

- **Community Engagement and Partnerships:** Project engages relevant communities and local stakeholders (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) project planning, co-design and post-implementation education and engagement to optimize the public use of and benefits to communities generated by the project. Project substantiates community partnerships and engagement through letters of support or shared investment in the project, demonstrated by including community partner entities as a match source in the proposal or sub-awarding grant funds requested in the proposal budget to community partners.

  Priority will be given to projects that directly benefit and engage low-income communities and communities of color. Projects that are not located in or meaningfully benefit these communities will be less competitive. Describe the community characteristics of the project area, identify any communities impacted, describe outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Use demographic data to support descriptions and submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed. To be competitive, proposals **must** include a plan to meaningfully engage the community throughout the project timeline, from design to post-implementation. Education or engagement activities may be supported by grant funds and may include, but are not limited to, programming, engagement events, establishing or supporting existing stewardship groups to maintain or enhance the impact of project elements, signage, etc.

  Meaningful community engagement and education efforts may be conducted by the applicant or, preferably, through a partnership-based effort between the primary grantee, community organizations or groups, municipalities, and/or relevant local or regional stakeholders. All projects will be required to submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

- **Climate Resilience in Design**: Project incorporates planning for increasingly severe and more frequent storm events and other climate-driven threats into their design, location, and/or function. Additionally, projects must identify existing and anticipated impacts of climate change on target communities and/or ecosystems and wildlife identified as the intended beneficiary of the grant funded work. Applicants should further describe how NFWF-funded interventions will help mitigate these impacts and threats to low-income communities and communities of color.

- **Matching Contributions:** Availability of match should not be the primary factor when an applicant decides whether or not to submit an application to the Fund. Match is not required. However, providing some match (in-kind, volunteer/staff time, equipment, cash, etc.) is encouraged to demonstrate project impact and partner investment where possible. The ratio of matching contributions offered to grant funding requested is one criterion considered during the review process. If you are concerned about match or wish to discuss potential matching contributions, please contact Traci Giefer at traci.giefer@nfwf.org.

- **Plan or Strategy Alignment**: Project advances an existing local, regional, watershed, tribal, state or federal plan or strategy. Applicants are encouraged to align their proposed projects with regional and local efforts and demonstrate how they would complement and connect to other previous and ongoing work in the region in the proposal narrative. Types of relevant plans or strategies may include, but are not limited to, watershed plans, municipal or regional domestic action plans, climate action plans, sustainability plans, green stormwater infrastructure strategies, such as the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments Green Infrastructure Vision for Southeast Michigan, the Detroit Sustainability Action Agenda, the Michigan Environmental Justice Plan, state wildlife action plans, federal or regional wildlife or natural resource strategies, such as Lakewide Action and Management Plans, Michigan's Forest Action Plan, Joint Venture plans, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Midwest Region Coastal Program Strategic Work Plan, Great Lakes Business Plan and other existing local strategies. For more information about relevant strategies and/or resources to support project development, visit https://www.nfwf.org/semichigan.

- **Regional Collaboration & Geographic Distribution of Projects:** The Fund will take the location of proposed project sites into consideration when evaluating proposals to ensure investments represent the regional scope of the Fund and are distributed throughout the region. Projects proposing work that extends to the regional scope, has established communication or collaboration plans to share key findings or project design with regional stakeholders, or connects partners from throughout the region will be more competitive.

Grantee Qualifications
- **Organizational Capacity:** Applicant organization demonstrates capacity and experience commensurate with the scale or complexity of the project being proposed and the funding requested.*

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

- **Past Success:** Project team has a proven track record of success in implementing practices with specific, measurable results.*

- ***Partnerships**: If the organization does not have the capacity or history of successes needed to constitute a competitive application alone, we highly encourage organizations to identify and collaborate with partner organizations to increase capacity and improve project design and outcomes. These partnerships may include multiple organizations needed to implement the project and authentically engage local stakeholders but elevate one higher capacity

organization to act as the applicant and pass-through entity for project funding if needed. Partnerships should also ensure additional funds are leveraged and that the project will be maintained after the life of the grant. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.) If the applicant is a government entity or municipality, close partnership with at least one non-profit and/or community organization is required to make projects competitive.

Implementation & Maintenance

- **On-the-Ground Implementation:** Project will apply the bulk (>70%) of grant funding to on-the-ground work, with the option of using the remaining funds for planning, permitting, final design, engineering, outreach, education, operation and maintenance (if the project's primary focus is improving or maintaining GSI, this would be considered on-the-ground work), or monitoring.

- **Cost-Effectiveness**: Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the economically most efficient way to meet project objectives. Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of effective direct/indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget according to the type, size and duration of project and project objectives. Project budgets will be compared to similar projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

- **Timeliness:** Project has completed or nearly completed planning, design and engineering to the extent that on-the-ground implementation can begin shortly after the grant is awarded.

- **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.

- **Long-Term Sustainability and Maintenance:** Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. Plans described in the proposal include how the organization will ensure long-term efficacy and sustainability of the project features including but not limited to, increasing or sustaining organizational capacity for long term maintenance, secure or plans to secure future funding for this activity, and partnerships established to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

- **Regional Connectivity & Scalability:** Project has the potential to catalyze additional efforts in communities or settings throughout Southeast Michigan where it has not been broadly deployed. Additionally, projects with regional scopes and partnerships that seek to improve regional collaboration and advance or establish regional strategies will be more competitive.

- **Transferability:** Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

- **Communication**: Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

OTHER

Applicant Demographic Information: In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic demographic information on applicants and their organizations via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers and will <u>not</u> be considered when making grant decisions. For more details, please see the tip sheet and the Uploads section of Easygrants.

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.

Environmental Services: NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in, facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

Intellectual Property: Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF's website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to: habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions), environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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

Procurement: If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not constitute NFWF's express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support: Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF's financial support for the grant in press

releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

Receiving Award Funds: Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

Compliance Requirements: Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Permits: Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

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

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information (https://www.nfwf.org/semichigan).

Applicant Webinar (Virtual)	August 4, 2022, 1:00-2:00 PM Eastern Time
Pre-Proposal Due Date	August 30, 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time
Full Proposal Invitations Distributed	Early October 2022
Full Proposal Due Date	November 3, 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time
Review Period	November 2022 – February 2023
Awards Announced	March 2023

After project selection, NFWF staff will work with applicants to prepare grant agreements and other necessary paperwork, all of which will be completed electronically using the Easygrants system. Additional information about the grantee's organization and its finances may be solicited during this time. Please note the preparation of grant agreements will require approximately 4 to 6 weeks from the time the NFWF receives the additional required information from the grantee. Once grant

agreements are finalized, funds will typically be paid to grantees on a reimbursable basis. Funds may be advanced to qualified grantees on an as-needed basis.

WEBINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to view **both** webinars prior to submitting an application.

1) Funding Opportunity Webinar
Fund partners will host a **virtual webinar August 4, 2022 from 1:00-2:00 PM ET.**
Register Here: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/3036354560750950155
At this workshop, NFWF staff will focus on answering attendee questions about the RFP and Fund priorities, assist with proposal development, facilitate a discussion around partnerships to connect applicants with potential collaborators, provide an in-depth review of application requirements, and share insights into crafting competitive proposals. Applicants are strongly encouraged to carefully review the RFP, have a good idea of their proposed project(s), initiated the application, and downloaded the proposal narratives prior.

2) Easygrants Instructional Webinar
The pre-recorded Easygrants webinar found here covers in-depth instructions for navigating Easygrants.

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through NFWF'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 document can be downloaded here.

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:

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

Easygrants Helpdesk
Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail: 202-595-2497
Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.
Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.