

2023 Funding Opportunity Guidance for Applicants





















Webinar Agenda

- Sustain Our Great Lakes overview
- Funding opportunity details
 - Information regarding four funding priorities
- Application guidance
- Q&A session After each section
- Housekeeping:
 - Q&A breaks
 - Webinar recording/slides and FAQ document at: www.nfwf.org/programs/sustain-our-great-lakes-program

Public-Private Partnership

- Cleveland-Cliffs
- Caerus Foundation
- General Mills
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation

- US Environmental Protection Agency
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- US Forest Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service



Program Achievements: 2006 - 2022

\$241 million

dedicated by SOGL and grantee organizations toward ecological restoration

\$111 million \$130 million awarded in grants by SOGL since 2006 MN IA IL IN MO

committed by grantees as match since 2006

Outcomes



2,452

Miles of fish passage restoration



45,867

Acres of wetland and upland restoration



527

Miles of stream and riparian habitat restoration



321M

Gallons of stormwater storage capacity added



2023 Funding Opportunity

- Pre-proposal due date: February 14
- Full proposal due date: April 25
- Eligible applicants
 - Non-profit organizations
 - State, tribal & local governments
 - Educational institutions
 - US applicants only
- Anticipated funding: up to \$18.7M
- Grant size:
 - \$200,000–\$1M (categories 1, 2, 3)
 - \$100k-\$350k (category 4)



Funding Categories - *Updated in 2023*

1. Habitat Restoration to Conserve Species and Improve Water Quality

Strategy 1: Stream and Riparian Habitat Restoration to Benefit Species

Strategy 2: Stream and Riparian Restoration to Improve Water Quality

Strategy 3: Coastal Habitat Restoration

- 2. Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Great Lakes Communities
- 3. Invasive Species Control to Protect and Enhance Restored Habitat
- 4. Conservation Practices and Regenerative Agriculture on Working Lands
 - Projects formerly eligible for the Wisconsin's Lake Michigan Watershed funding category should apply under these four primary categories

Funding Category 1 - Habitat Restoration to Conserve Species and Improve Water Quality

- Up to \$4.9 million total available for grants
- Combines previously separate SOGL funding categories focused on habitat type (stream, wetland)
- Funding priorities: improve stream, riparian and coastal habitat to benefit priority fish and bird species, including those prioritized in GLRI Action Plan III Focus Area 4 (page 25) and state or federally threatened and endangered species, and improve water quality
- Projects should support one of the three restoration strategies under category 1 unless the project is large in scope and will deliver significant outcomes to benefit more than one target species or species group



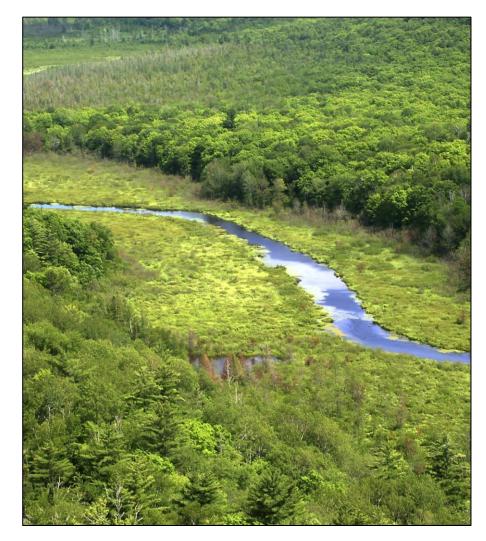




Funding Category 1 - Habitat Restoration to Conserve Species and Improve Water Quality

Strategy 1: Stream and Riparian Habitat Restoration to Benefit Species

- 1. Restore aquatic connectivity: barrier removal, bridge and culvert replacement, and passage structure installation to facilitate movements of brook trout or lake sturgeon
- 2. Naturalize stream channel configuration: channel realignment and excavation to restore stream meander, floodplain connections, and other geomorphological processes
- **3. Improve in-stream habitat**: installation of in-stream structures to improve geomorphological processes and habitat complexity
- 4. Improve riparian habitat: bank stabilization, and native plant restoration along streambanks and floodplain to improve habitat and water quality



Strategy 1: Stream and Riparian Habitat Restoration to Benefit Species

Approx 32% of Funding Category 1 funding available for this strategy.

Competitive projects will:

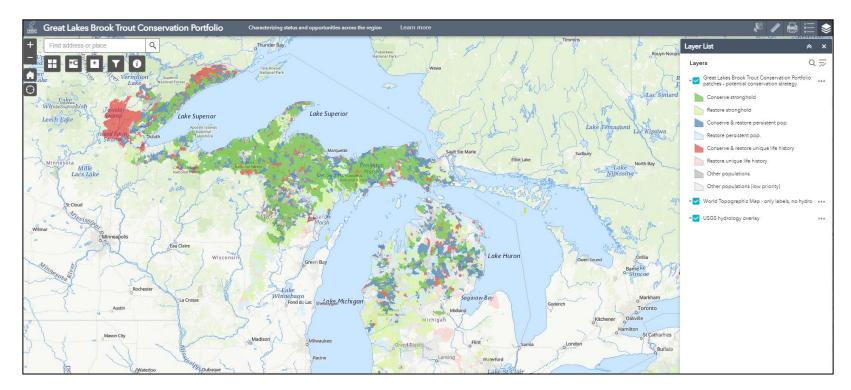
- Provide meaningful benefits to brook trout or lake sturgeon
- Directly address strategies/priorities for conservation action indicated in the Brook Trout Conservation Portfolio web tool (brook trout) or regional/state strategies for species recovery
- Indicate how proposed activities will address climate change related threats and associated impacts to habitat quality habitat and resilience



Strategy 1: Stream and Riparian Habitat Restoration to Benefit Species

Brook Trout Conservation Portfolio web tool

- Demonstrate value of selected stream sites based on the patch designation and/or regional conservation strategies and indicate anticipated benefit to brook trout populations
- Ensure proposed conservation actions are aligned with or address recommendations generated for the relevant patch(es) selected for the project activities



Funding Category 1 - Habitat Restoration to Conserve Species and Improve Water Quality

Strategy 2: Stream and Riparian Restoration to Improve Water Quality

- 1. Improve riparian and floodplain habitat: bank stabilization, and native plant restoration along streambanks and riparian wetlands and floodplains to improve water quality, protect or enhance high quality or previously restored habitat, and enhance habitat for priority species by reducing runoff of nutrients and sedimentation
- 2. Naturalize stream channel configuration: channel realignment and excavation to restore stream meander, floodplain connections, and other geomorphological processes
- **3. Improve in-stream habitat:** installation of in-stream structures to enhance resilience, reduce flooding and enhance habitat complexity for fish and other aquatic organisms

Strategy 2: Stream and Riparian Restoration to Improve Water Quality

Approx 51% of Funding Category 1 funding available for this strategy.

Competitive projects will:

- <u>Directly</u> benefit high quality and/or previously restored habitat through water quality improvements
- Indicate how proposed activities will address climate change related threats and associated impacts to habitat quality habitat and resilience
- Provide meaningful secondary benefits to priority species such as native freshwater mussels, northern pike, migratory birds, etc.



Funding Category 1 - Habitat Restoration to Conserve Species and Improve Water Quality

Strategy 3: Coastal Habitat Restoration

- 1. Improve coastal habitat structure: improve habitat function and quality to benefit shorebirds, waterfowl and/or breeding marsh birds.
 - Invasive species control: Invasive species control must be included as a component of broader habitat restoration activities proposed. If the majority of project activities and budget are directed toward ISC, see funding category 3.
- 2. Restore coastal aquatic connectivity and hydrology: restoration actions that improve hydrological connectivity between Great Lakes waters and adjacent wetlands/streams including installation of passage structures, or removal of sediment and hard structures to improve access by fish and suitable habitat for shorebirds, waterfowl and breeding marsh birds

Strategy 3: Coastal Habitat Restoration

Approx 17% of Funding Category 1 funding available for this strategy.

Competitive Projects will:

- Occur on non-federal lands that restore wetlands monitored by the Great Lakes CWMP
- Benefit populations of shorebirds, breeding marsh birds and waterfowl
- Be planned, designed or informed by species monitoring efforts and climate change related threats/anticipated impacts to habitat quality and resilience
- CWMP Priority wetland map: <u>www.greatlakeswetlands.org/map</u>
- Note: Projects that request funds to install or maintain jetties, breakwalls or other grey infrastructure will not be considered for funding.



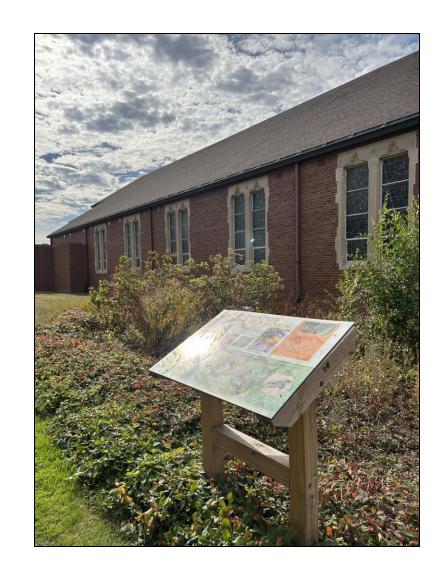


Funding Category 2: Expand Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Great Lakes Communities

Up to \$9.5 million available for grants

Strategies:

- 1. Create and enhance stormwater wetlands: construction of wetlands in communities to slow, store and filter stormwater and reduce flooding while improving habitat
- 2. Install green infrastructure: installation of rain gardens, bioswales, pervious surfaces, and other green infrastructure solutions to increase stormwater storage, reduce flooding and capture and enhance community green space
- 3. Restore urban and community forests: strategic planting of diverse native tree species along riparian zones and other flood-prone areas to slow and retain stormwater runoff, sequester carbon, reduce heat-island effects, moderate water temperatures, improve habitat, and increase ecosystem resilience



Funding Category 2: Expand Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Great Lakes Communities

- Competitive projects will:
 - Add more than 100,000 gallons of stormwater storage capacity (include calculation for volume of runoff captured annually)
 - Meaningfully and directly engage and benefit underserved communities
 - Demonstrate water quality benefits to the Great Lakes or connecting channels
 - Utilize native plant and tree species that improve pollinator habitat and urban canopy
- Calculate gallons of stormwater storage added: <u>EPA Stormwater Calculator</u> <u>i-Tree</u>







Funding Category 3: Invasive Species Control to Protect and Enhance Restored Habitat

Up to \$3 million available for grants

Strategies:

- 1. Re-Treat or Manage Acres to Control Invasive Species: treat acres that have received initial treatment to further control primary invasive species target(s) and management of secondary invasives appearing post-initial treatment. This retreatment is called phase 2 invasive species control.
 - Preference to projects previously funded by SOGL or GLRI
- 2. Expand Existing Invasive Control Efforts: treat or manage invasive species on new/previously untreated acres adjacent or strategically connected to existing control efforts to protect restored habitat from secondary invasives and encroachment.





Funding Category 3: Invasive Species Control to Protect and Enhance Restored Habitat

- Competitive projects will:
 - demonstrate how proposed invasive control work directly protects, reinforces or enhances the value of habitat restoration projects previously funded by the GLRI or SOGL
 - advance invasive control activities through a stewardship lens
- All applicants must include a stewardship and/or maintenance plan that details project operation and management for at least five (5) years after project completion.







Funding Category 4: Conservation Practices and Regenerative Agriculture on Working Lands

Up to \$1.3 million available for grants

Strategies:

- 1. Improve Soil Health, Water Quality and Biodiversity: provide technical assistance to landowners to strategically apply soil health and RA conservation practices, such as cover crops, riparian buffers and wetlands, no-till and other practices
- 2. Engage Landowners in Conservation and Regenerative Agriculture Planning and Peer to Peer Learning: coordinate landowner/producer outreach and implementation of conservation systems and RA principles. Convene farmer-led groups to engage in peer-to-peer learning, discussion and conservation planning to advance regional knowledge and adoption of RA principles.
- 3. Reduce Farm Bill Practice Contracting and Implementation Backlog: coordinate with NRCS to accelerate the implementation of and completion of previously contracted Farm Bill practices and decrease the time enrolled and interested producers wait between Farm Bill enrollment to implementation.

Funding Category 4: Conservation Practices and Regenerative Agriculture on Working Lands

- Competitive projects will:
 - Build upon established relationships with landowners through previous work or by engaging local partners
 - Support landowners in advancing a holistic approach to managing working lands that build soil productivity and enhance the ecosystem
 - Improve soil health, water quality and biodiversity by providing technical assistance to landowners to strategically apply regenerative agriculture (RA) conservation practices
 - Recommend comprehensive TA approaches that focus on a given geography (e.g., watershed, county(ies), region, etc.) or focus on a specific type of producer, such as diaries.



Funding Category 4: Conservation Practices and Regenerative Agriculture on Working Lands

Additional Requirements and Details

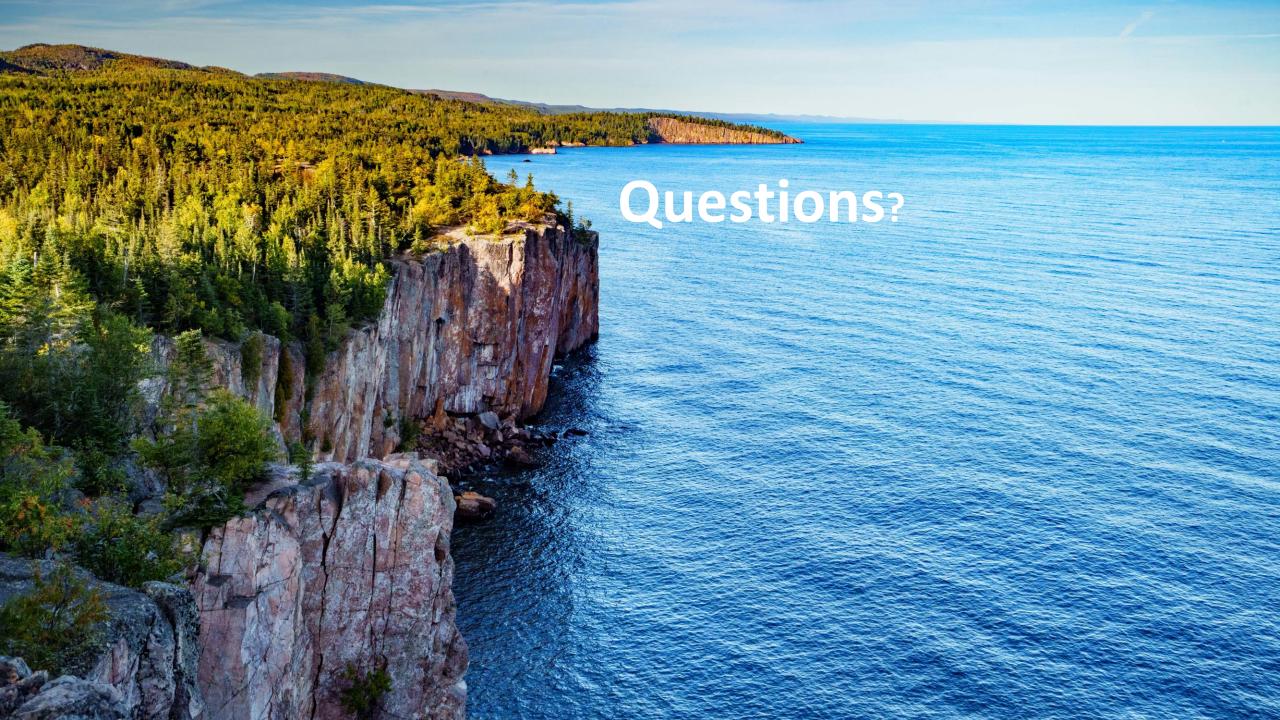
• Grant size: \$100-350k

Grant duration: 2 to 3 years

- 1:1 non-federal match required
- ~\$800,000 to projects engaging growers and dairies in
 MI lower peninsula, the Lake Michigan watershed of
 IN and the western Lake Erie watershed of IN, OH and MI
- Applicants encouraged to engage producers and orgs that identify as belonging to one or more NRCS' <u>Historically Underserved</u> and <u>Special Emphasis</u> categories







Monitoring

- Applicants may use grant funding to support monitoring
- Monitoring plan
 - Metrics in proposal
 - Baseline and post-implementation
 - Resources
- Monitoring biological outcomes
 - Improvements to priority fish, breeding marsh birds, shorebirds and waterfowl, pollinators etc.
 - Wetland habitat type changes
 - Contact NFWF for guidance





Guidance for Metrics Reporting and Monitoring

- Additional instructions for metrics and monitoring
 - Fish passage improvements
 - Stream/channel restoration
 - Riparian restoration
 - Brook trout habitat improvements
 - Wetland reconnection
 - Wetland hydrology improvements
 - Wetland habitat improvements
 - Green stormwater infrastructure
 - Invasive species control

Guidance for Applicants and Grantees: Metrics Reporting and Monitoring

B.1.1 Purpose and Intended Uses

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) applicants/grantees when reporting on project activities and metrics during full proposal development and subsequent metric tracking after grant award.

The specific project types this appendix addresses includes:

- Section B.2: Fish passage improvements
- Section B.3: Stream/channel restoration or naturalization
- Section B.4: Riparian restoration
- Section B.5: Brook trout habitat improvements
- Section B.6: Wetland reconnection
- Section B.b. Wetland reconnected
- <u>Section B.7</u>: Wetland hydrology improvements
 <u>Section B.8</u>: Wetland habitat/vegetation improvements
- Section B.9: Implementation of agricultural best management practices
- Section B.10: Installation of green infrastructure for stormwater retention

Please note that in some cases, grantees may need to follow guidance for multiple project types depending on the scope of project activities proposed.

B.1.2 General Guidance on Activity/Metrics Reporting

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) requests that applicants/grantees report on proposed project activities using Easygrants or, when specified, by including information in the narrative of the full proposal and subsequent interim report narratives. NFWF uses this information to inform individual project funding recommendations, track grant/project progress throughout the life of a grant, and summarize outcomes across projects to assess program impact. To ensure reporting and tallying is done correctly, grantees should follow the guidance in this document to the extent feasible, including specifics about how to gather and report relevant data.

The potential for double-counting project activities, and guidance on how applicants/grantees can help NFWF avoid it, is an issue mentioned in multiple sections below. Double-counting is primarily a concern when grantees are reporting on the total number of acres or miles restored by a project. For example, consider a 10-acre project that removed invasive plants and planted native vegetation on all 10 acres. While the total restoration footprint (i.e., the total number of acres restored) would be 10, grantees may instead report 20 acres as the total number restored (i.e., 10 acres for invasive removal and 10 acres for planting) if not given specific guidance about how to handle multiple activities that occur on the same acres. To address this potential confusion, in most cases, one metric has been identified for reporting the total geographic footprint on which all restoration activities have occurred.

However, it is important to note that outside of metrics that are specifically focused on understanding the total footprint of a given project (e.g., total acres or stream miles restored), grantees can report on restoration activities separately, even if they occur on the same acres or stream miles. For example, for a barrier removal project, grantees can report the number of

Required Upload – at full proposal phase

Metrics and Outcomes Tracking Document

- Objective: provide additional data/details for metrics and outcomes to enhance full proposal narrative
- Fill out sections corresponding to funding category
 - Streams
 - Coastal Systems
 - GSI
 - Invasive Species
 - Regenerative Ag
- Provide additional priority species data, approaches to calculating metrics/outcomes, and other relevant info

Applicant Demographic Information Form – at pre-proposal phase

- The information you provide will <u>not</u> be shared with proposal reviewers and will <u>not</u> be considered when making grant decisions.
- The Foundation will <u>not</u> share identifying information about any particular entity or project.
- While the form is a required upload, applicants can opt out of providing the information within the form itself
 - If your organization does not collect this information or if you have provided NFWF with this information in the last 12 months, you can opt out.
- The information provided on this excel form will be kept confidential, the Foundation may share its anonymized aggregate findings as appropriate with its staff, Board of Directors, funding partners, and publicly on its website or through other media.

APPLICANT DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION As part of NFWF's goal to encourage and support diversity across the conservation projects we fund, we would like to better u To accomplish this task, we are asking organizations that we fund to assist us by providing basic information about their wor As part of this effort to support diversity, we also desire to understand how our grantees engage with the communities where t The information provided on this excel form will be kept confidential, although the Foundation may share its aggregate findi <u>not</u> share identifying information about any particular entity or project. These anonymized aggregate data will be used by N The information you provide will not be shared with proposal reviewers and will not be consi Instructions: Complete all pertinent fields shaded in green. Your Human Resources Department may have some of the infi lf you do not know an answer, use the "don't know/not sure" option instead of guessing. If a section does not apply to your org You may opt out of providing this information to NFWF; however, you still <u>must upload this form to Easygrants</u> with your app All applicants must complete this section, even if you have provided this data to NFWF in the If you have provided this data to NFWF in the past 12 months you do not need to provide it again but you must still complete Easygrants project #from your grant application: Grant program name shown on the RFP: If you are opting out, select a reason from the dropdown list in the green box General Information Date Completed: Project Title: Organization Full Name: Organization EIN: Organization Type: Click on the gre Organization Size (number of employees) Click on the gre PART 1: APPLICANT ORGANIZATION - ALL EMPLOYEES (if applicable) Please provide the following demographic information about <u>all</u> of your organization's employees, <u>including senior leaders</u> 1. How many people currently work for your organization? (Include temporary and part-time employees in your response but Total Number: 2. How many of your employees identify as each gender?

Eligible Grant Expenses: Categories 1 - 4

- ≥70% of each grant to go toward on-the-ground habitat work
- Option to use remaining funds (≤30%) for
 - Planning
 - Permitting
 - Final design
 - Engineering
 - Monitoring
 - Outreach/Education



Matching Contributions

- Projects with minimum 1:1 non-federal match ratio most competitive
 - Indicate federal match to demonstrate partner investment in project
- Match sources
 - Cash
 - In-kind contributions of staff
 - Materials and services donated
 - Volunteer time
 - Cost of land acquisition/easement
 - Allowable indirect costs not covered by grant funding
 - Other tangible contributions to project goals



Matching Contributions

- Categories 1-3: Match is not required
 - Projects with minimum 1:1 non-federal match tend to be more competitive
 - Indicate all match sources non-federal and federal to demonstrate partner investment in project
- Category 4: 1:1 match required
 - Projects are required to provide at least a 1:1 match ratio with contributions from non-federal sources to be considered for funding
- Match must be spent between project start and end dates. Backing dating is not allowed.





Match and Period of Performance

Period of Performance

- Start date should be no earlier than September 1, 2023*
- Duration typically 2 years (or two full field seasons)
- May include a third year as needed to complete:
 - Planning
 - Permitting
 - Final design
 - Engineering
 - Implementation
 - Baseline Monitoring
 - Post-Restoration Monitoring



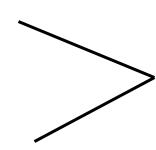
Additional Application Requirements

- Applicants proposing removal or modification of fish passage barriers
 - Consultation with Sea Lamprey Control Program (Program)
 - Pre-Proposal: Initiate consultation with Program
 - Full-Proposal: Provide evidence that barriers have been approved/reviewed by program
- Applicants proposing phragmites control
 - Demonstrate consideration of Phragmites Adaptive Management Framework (PAMF) to inform control practices and long-term maintenance
 - To learn more, visit:
 http://www.greatlakesphragmites.net/pamf/
 - To connect with PAMF/ask questions, email: pamf@glc.org



Regulatory Compliance

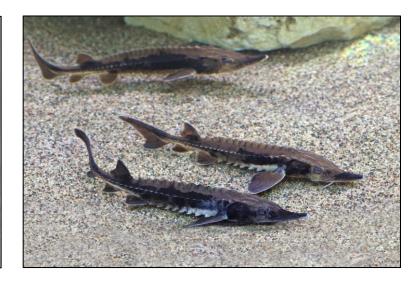
- National Environmental Policy Act
- Endangered Species Act
- National Historic Preservation Act



- Required for most projects
- Must be approved prior to any ground-disturbing work occurring
- EAGL (annual progress updates and supporting documentation)









Application Process

Pre-Proposal (due 2/14)

- Contact Information
- Project Information:
 - Title
 - Period of Performance
 - Description & location
 - Requested amount
- Matching Contributions
- Uploads:
 - 2-page max. narrative
 - Applicant Demographic Form



Full Proposal (due 4/25)

- Contact Information
- Project Information:
 - Title
 - Period of Performance
 - Description & location
 - Requested amount
- Matching Contributions
- Map
- Metrics
- Budget
- Uploads:
 - 6-page max. narrative
 - Additional metrics/monitoring document
 - Letters of support required
 - Financial documents
 - Photos

Metrics – at full proposal phase

- Only metrics relevant to the proposed project should be selected
- Required metrics per funding category
- All starting values should be zero (0)*
- Avoid double counting
- Complete metrics notes & complete metrics upload
- Grantees will be required to report progress toward project outcomes in terms of metrics selected

Funding Strate

Habitat Restora

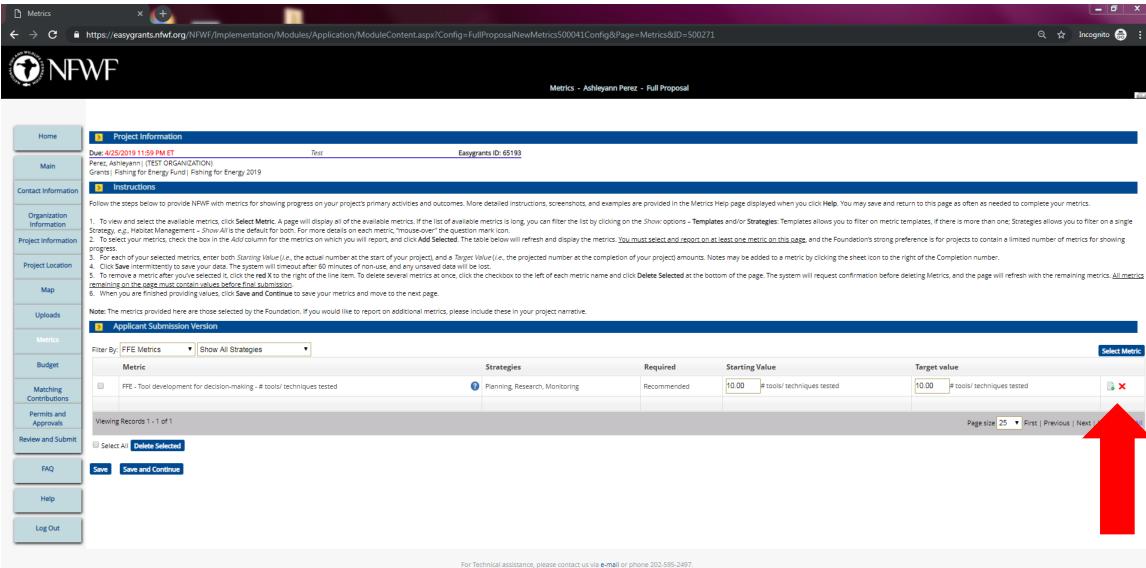
Conserve Specia

Improve Water

Quality

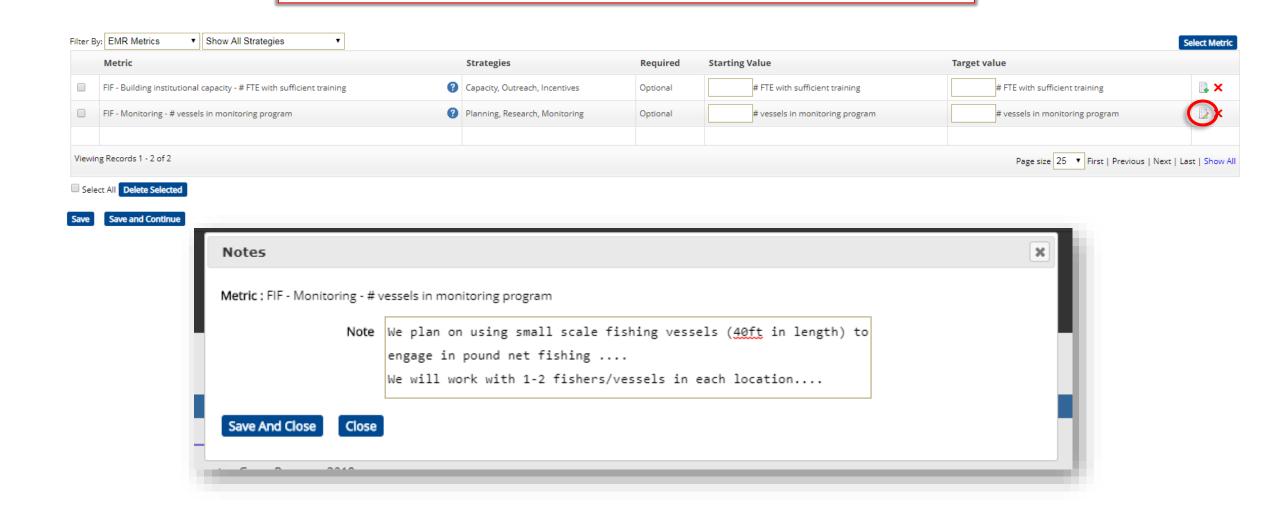
Expand Green Stormwater Infrastructure in Great Lakes Communities *Required metric	*Gallons of stormwater storage added (include projection of gallons of stormwater captured or infiltrated annually) Square feet of impervious surface removed Square feet of green infrastructure installed Number of trees planted (include tree size, planting density and anticipated total acres of tree planting) Lbs. of phosphorus prevented from entering system annually Lbs. of sediment prevented from entering system annually Lbs. of nitrogen prevented from entering system annually # volunteer hours Acres of greenspace created or improved
Invasive Species Control to Protect and Enhance Habitat *Required metric	*Acres restored (total area treated, re-treated or controlled for invasive species) Acres of wetland habitat restored
Conservation Practices and Regenerative Agriculture on Working Lands *Required metric	*# jobs created *# people reached *# people reached *# participants receiving gov't agency cost share or financial assistance *Dollar value of government agency cost share or financial assistance *Acres covered by government agency cost share or financial assistance *Acres go f project footprint Acres with conservation tillage Acres with cover crops Acres with enhanced nutrient mgt Acres with managed grazing Lbs N avoided (annually) Lbs P avoided (annually) Lbs sediment avoided (annually) Acres burned Acre feet of water conserved # BMPs implemented # Management plans with BMPs developed Land restoration-Acres restored Wetland restoration-Acres restored Land restoration-Acres of field buffers created Land restoration-Acres of trees planted Land restoration-Removal of Invasives-Acres restored Acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr) Acres acquired in fee # mgmt plans with BMPs

Metrics – at full proposal phase



Metrics – at full proposal phase

Add notes to selected metrics provided.



Application Assistance – Resources

What resources should I reference?

- 1. SOGL 2023 RFP
 - a. <u>Tip Sheet</u> (Step-by-step pre- to full proposal guidance)
 - b. <u>Metrics Guidance</u> (SOGL metrics reporting and monitoring guidance)
 - c. <u>Easygrants Instructional Webinar</u> (Step-by-step video tutorial to complete a proposal online)
- 2. <u>NFWF Application Information</u>
 - a. <u>Budget instructions</u>
 - Download <u>Detailed Budget and Narrative Guide</u>
 - *REQUIRED: Provide a respective budget narrative describing purpose of each line item towards the project
 - b. Required financial documents (Financial documents must be for the same fiscal year and no more than 2 years old)
 - c. <u>Indirect Cost Policy</u>

Application Assistance – Easygrants

How do I get started?

- 1. Review RFP thoroughly and ask questions early!
- 2. If you've never used Easygrants before, create your login at <u>easygrants.nfwf.org</u> **TODAY** and familiarize yourself with the system. All applicants view the <u>pre-recorded Easygrants webinar</u>.
- 3. Turn off your browser's pop-up blockers
- 4. Download <u>Tip Sheet</u> + use as reference to complete each section
- 5. Provide a phone number in your Easygrants account. Keep your email and proposal contact information up-to-date as NFWF will use this to send application updates.
- 6. DO NOT mail physical letters of support to NFWF, upload digital copies to Easygrants to Uploads section

Application Assistance – Award Acceptance

What should I expect if I receive a NFWF award?

- New NFWF process to minimize # of proposals resubmissions to complete contracting
- Gap (1-2 months) between hearing from NFWF after award notification. NFWF needs more time to bring forward all proposal revisions at once.
- Process can take several months Please respond to proposal resubmission requests <u>within two</u>
 <u>weeks</u> to keep your proposal moving toward approval & signed grant agreement!
- NFWF cannot reimburse until grant agreement signed & grant activated in Easygrants

3 commonly missed in full proposal that WILL delay contracting:

- Metrics
- Budget narratives
- Financial documents

Timeline

Pre-Proposal Due Date: <u>Tuesday, February 14th, 11:59 PM ET</u>

Invites to Full Proposal: Late-March 2023

Full Proposal Due Date: <u>Tuesday, April 25th, 11:59pm ET</u>

Awards Announced: September 2023





Contacts

Programmatic Questions

Aislinn Gauchay

Program Director

Great Lakes

Phone: 612-564-7284

Email: Aislinn.Gauchay@nfwf.org

Traci Giefer

Senior Program Manager

Great Lakes

Phone: 612-564-7296

Email: Traci.Giefer@nfwf.org

Application/Easygrants Questions

Minna Wong

Coordinator, Regional Programs

Phone: 202-595-2657

Email: Minna.Wong@nfwf.org

Technical Assistance / 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.