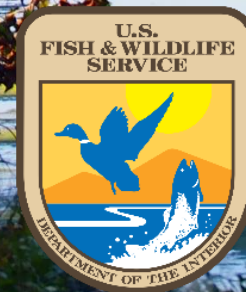# 2023 Applicant Webinar Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund

Dedicated to restoring the fish and wildlife habitats and water quality of the Delaware River and its tributaries.

General Session Agenda

1. Webinar Instructions

2. Introduction to NFWF

3. Review of Request for Proposals

   ✓ Grant Opportunities and Priorities

      • Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund

   ✓ Evaluation Criteria & Compliance Requirements

4. Frequently Asked Questions

5. Q&A

6. Using EasyGrants

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Webinar Instructions

- To improve sound quality, all participants will be muted for the duration of the webinar. If you want to ask a question you have two options:

  1. Enter your query where it says "Enter a question for staff" and click send. Erin will type a response or read your question aloud when we pause for Q&A.

  2. Write it down and contact us after the webinar. We have a lot of material to cover, so you may prefer to have a more in-depth discussion later.

- We may ask you to raise your "hand" in the webinar dialogue box to confirm participants can hear us.

- If you experience a technical glitch, please type it into the question box, since we can't hear you. (We may not know about the glitch unless you say something!)
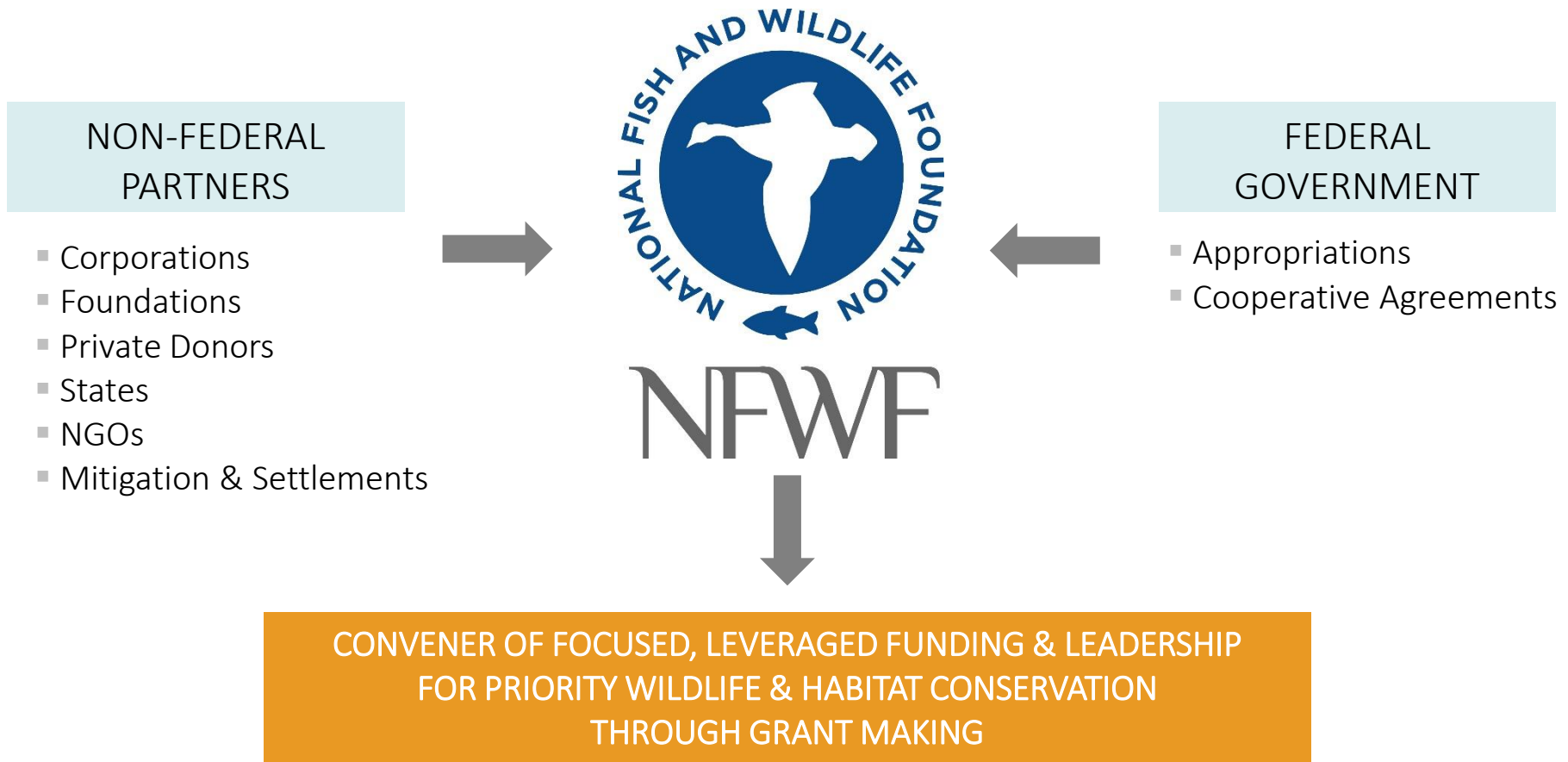
The webinar will be available for download next week at www.nfwf.org/delaware
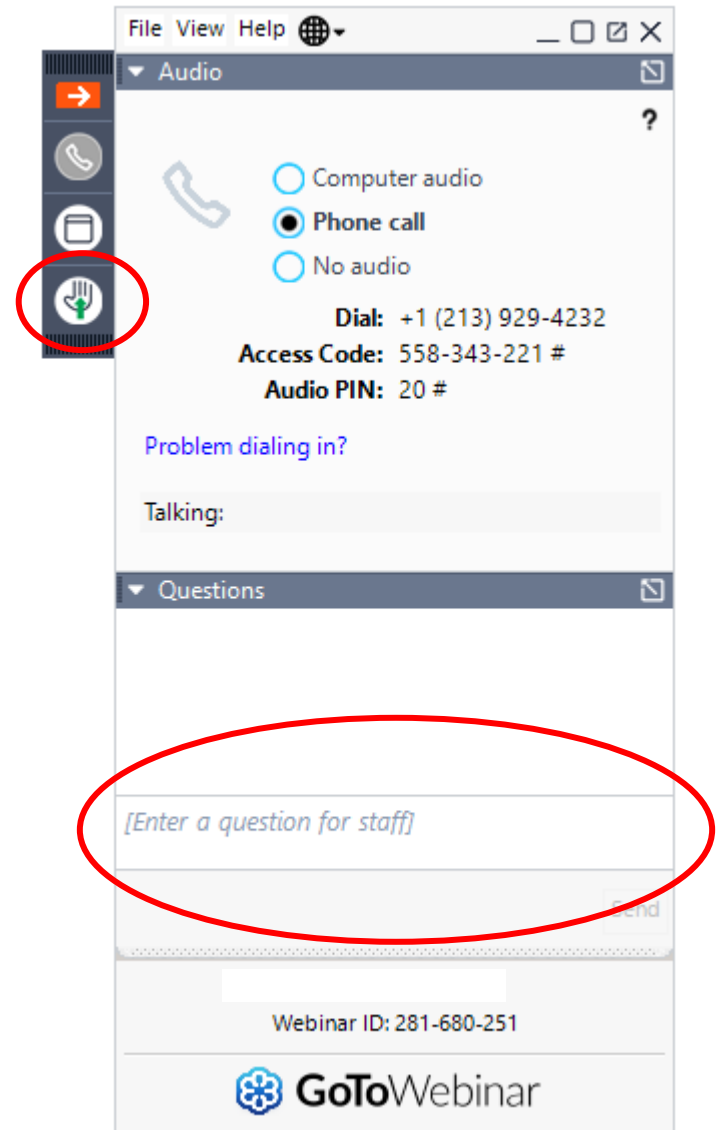
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Introduction to NFWF – HOW WE DO IT

NON-FEDERAL PARTNERS

- Corporations
- Foundations
- Private Donors
- States
- NGOs
- Mitigation & Settlements

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Appropriations
- Cooperative Agreements

CONVENER OF FOCUSED, LEVERAGED FUNDING & LEADERSHIP FOR PRIORITY WILDLIFE & HABITAT CONSERVATION THROUGH GRANT MAKING

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DWCF Overview

- 2018 = inaugural year for the DWCF

- Goal to conserve and restore natural areas, corridors and waterways on public and private lands to contribute to the vitality of the communities in the Delaware River watershed

- Approximately $14.4 million in grant funding available

- Major funding is provided by the U.S Fish & Wildlife Service; program administered in partnership with FWS

- Program designed to deliver the Delaware River Basin Restoration Partnership and Program Framework

2023 AWARD RANGE:

$75,000 - $1,500,000

U.S. FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Program Area

Terrestrial Networks
Connector
Core Area

Aquatic Networks
Core Area
Core Buffer

Source: Nature's Network

Geographic Focus

- All 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 should consult NFWF's online mapping portal to determine appropriate geographic focus areas for their proposed project activities and alignment with NFWF's Delaware Business Plan and Nature's Network priorities.

DWCF Grants

- **Purpose of all DWCF Grants**: Implement on-the-ground restoration and conservation projects that achieve the goals of the *Delaware River Basin Restoration Partnership and Program Framework* for all four Strategic Program Areas:
    1. Sustain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat;
    2. Improve and maintain water quality for fish, wildlife and people;
    3. Sustain and enhance water management to benefit fish and wildlife;
    4. Improve outdoor recreational opportunities

- DWCF grants should include **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

Strategic Program Area 1

SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES

- **Focus:** conserve and restore ecological function to the important habitats for which the fish and wildlife resources in the basin depend

- **Objective:** conservation and restoration of habitats that will result in ecological, recreational, and commercial benefits

Goal: To sustain and restore fish and wildlife populations through conservation and restoration of their associated habitats and promote native ecosystem restoration

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

- **Focus:** non-regulatory efforts to provide additional focus on habitat protection and conservation activities

- **Objective:** to protect water quality for both drinking water and the health of the fish and wildlife resources that depend on clean water

Goal: To protect and maintain water quality through projects and non-regulatory programs aimed at improving land and watershed management and reduce pollutants that can impair water quality

Strategic Program Area 3

SUSTAIN AND ENHANCE WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT FOR VOLUME AND FLOOD DAMAGE MITIGATION IMPROVEMENTS TO BENEFIT FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

- **Focus:** non-regulatory efforts to support the demands on the water resources of the basin and to enhance tolerance of potential drought and flood conditions

- **Objective:** manage water use to meet drinking water needs and other human uses while still providing water to support fish and wildlife

Goal: To provide non-regulatory support to the management of water resources to meet the various human and ecological needs and legal requirements in the basin and restore ecological function to the watershed, river, and tributaries in order to provide enhanced tolerance of potential drought and flood conditions

Strategic Program Area 4

IMPROVE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATION IN THE BASIN CONSISTENT WITH THE ECOLOGICAL NEEDS OF FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

- **Focus:** maintaining and improving access to outdoor recreational opportunities

- **Objective:** provide high-quality recreational experiences while supporting the needs of fish and wildlife

Goal: *To maintain and improve recreational opportunities which are compatible with the conservation of natural resources*

Questions?

New RFP Structure

- Four funding categories:
  - Implementation Grants
    - $8M available
    - 1:1 match
  - Capacity Building Grants
    - $2M available
    - Match requirement is 20% of request to NFWF
  - Planning Grants
    - $2M available
    - 1:1 match
  - Research, Monitoring, & Evaluation Grants
    - $2M available
    - 1:1 match

Implementation Grants

- $8,000,000 available

- 1:1 match requirement

- Range: $75,000 to $1,500,000 each

- Shovel-ready conservation and restoration projects that result in quantifiable benefits for fish, wildlife, and people within the Delaware River Watershed

- Note: $1M available for projects that directly benefit priority at-risk and ESA species
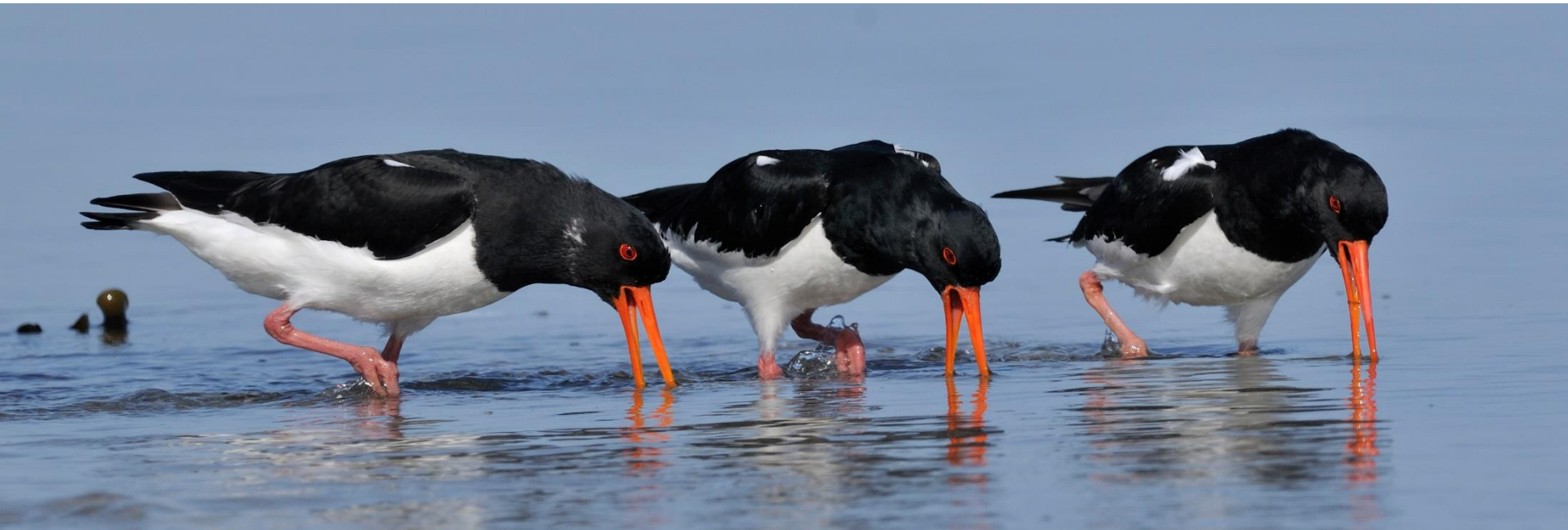
Capacity-Building Grants

- $2,000,000 available
- Match requirement is 20% of the request to NFWF
- Range: $75,000 to $500,000 each
- Establish and enhance local networks to accomplish shared goals; support strategic planning and project development; improve direct community engagement; advance Tribal co-stewardship initiatives; implement diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) in conservation; and undertake programmatic evaluations, assessments and monitoring
- Applicants are encouraged to work in partnership with other organizations interested in similar capacity-building efforts (e.g., "cohorts")
- Note: If new staff are hired, there must be a clear plan for sustaining staff without DWCF grants in the future.

Planning Grants

- $2,000,000 available

- 1:1 match requirement

- Range: $75,000 to $500,000 each

- Engagement, planning and prioritization; feasibility, suitability, or alternatives analyses; site assessment and conceptual design; and final design and permits.

- Set-the-stage for projects that can compete for larger, nationally competitive funding sources and/or have watershed wide impacts.
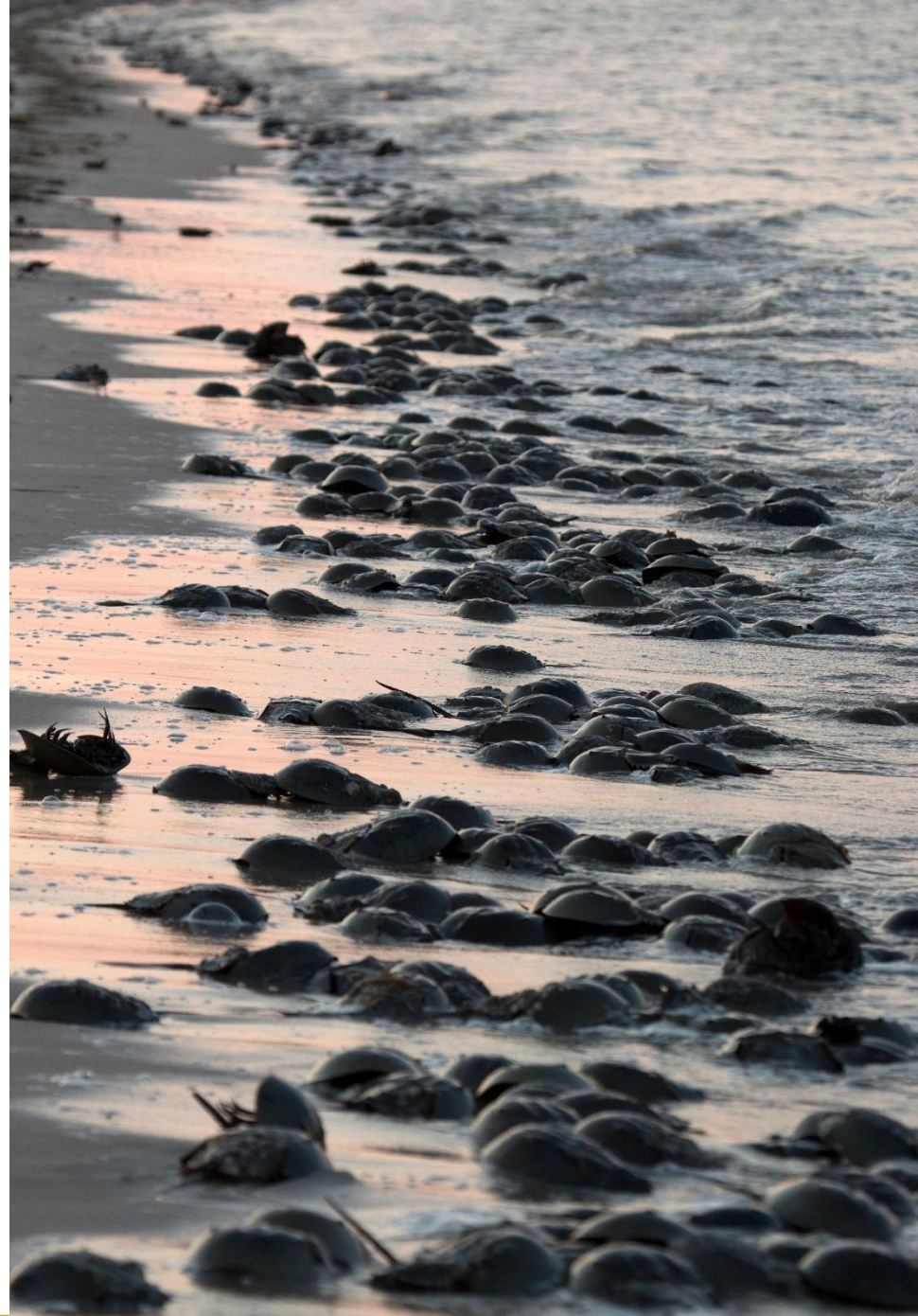
Research, Monitoring, & Evaluation Grants

- $2,000,000 available

- 1:1 match requirement

- Range: $75,000 to $500,000 each

- High-performing science that is inclusive, adaptive, innovative, and accountable

- Projects should have significant potential to transform the Delaware River watershed's future in areas including conservation and restoration action, diversity and inclusion, Tribal co-stewardship, monitoring, research, evaluation, and public access

- Prioritize 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

DWCF Species

NFWF Priority species from Delaware Business Plan:

- Eastern brook trout
- Alosine species like American shad, Alewife and river herring
- Golden-winged warbler
- Wood thrush
- Cerulean warbler
- Saltmarsh Sparrow
- Red knot

FWS Endangered Species Act species:

- Red knot
- Bog turtle
- Black rail
- Dwarf wedgemussel
- Northern Long-eared Bat
- Atlantic Sturgeon
- Shortnose Sturgeon

FWS At-risk species:

Birds
- American oystercatcher
- Ruddy turnstone
- Whimbrel
- Eastern whip-poor-will

Freshwater mussels
- Brook floater
- Green floater
- Tidewater mucket
- Yellow lampmussel

Pollinators
- Native bumblebees
- Monarch butterfly
- Frosted elfin
- Septima's Clubtail

Turtles
- Spotted turtle
- Wood turtle

Tree Planting Projects

- Seeking **DWCF** projects with significant tree planting

- Examples include:

  – Riparian buffer plantings

  – Urban and suburban canopy expansion

  – Reforestation and afforestation

  – Other tree planting practices for improved habitat and water quality

- Use the metric for number of trees planted in addition to other appropriate metrics

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice (DEIJ) in DWCF

NFWF is taking steps to encourage and support our partners and grantees in the Delaware River watershed to work toward fostering inclusive practices that counteract discrimination and environmental injustice. Incorporating DEIJ considerations into organizational and project practices and policies will foster a safe, diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment that allows for new, enhanced and more impactful partnerships.

Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Resource Hub

https://www.delriverwatershed.org/deij-resource-hub

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice (DEIJ) in DWCF

a. *Describe the community(ies) where the project will take place and who will benefit from the project. Using the table below, provide demographic information on the community(ies) and target audiences to support descriptions. Applicants can use the US Census Bureau website and EPA's EJ Screen to obtain demographic data for the table below. Applicants are encouraged to include an EJ Screen report as an upload in addition to the descriptions provided below. Please see the DWCF Toolbox for information on pulling an EJ Screen report.*

Community(ies) or Target Audience	Race/Ethnicity	Poverty Rate	Low Income %	Annualized Unemployment Rate

b. *Describe outreach and community engagement activities, how they were or will be engaged in project development and implementation, and how those will be monitored and measured. See the "Direct Community Engagement" call out box for examples.*

Applicant Demographic Information Form

- 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.

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Eligibility

✓ 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:

- Support of ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements

- Support of political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations

Overall Evaluation Criteria

All Proposals:

- Technical Merit

- Budget and Cost-effectiveness

- Program Goals and Strategies

- Conservation Context

- Partnership and Community Impact

Compliance Requirements

- All DWCF awards include U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) funding, so your project must comply with the requirements of NEPA, ESA, NHPA, and other relevant state and federal legislation.

  - You are encouraged to budget for time/resources to complete these requirements!

- Buy American Act: The [Build America Buy America Act](#), enacted as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) on November 15, 2021, established a domestic content procurement preference for all Federal financial assistance obligated for infrastructure projects after May 14, 2022, which will apply to 2023 DWCF grantees.

- Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Requirements: Davis-Bacon labor standards apply to federally funded or assisted construction projects in different ways, including provisions that expressly provide that Davis-Bacon labor standards apply to all construction projects receiving funding under particular programs created by or funded through IIJA.

Overall Proposal Guidelines

- Projects should be completed within 2 years of award

- Provide measurable outputs and outcomes, choose your metrics wisely and provide details requested (see Metrics Guidance document)

- If you haven't thought about permits and compliance yet, START NOW!

- Review Letters of Support Best Practices and start collecting your letters of support (write templates for your partners)

- Pursuant to OMB rules, indirect <u>is allowed</u> – please review the policy on our website (https://www.nfwf.org/grants/application-information/indirect-cost-calculator)

- Complete your budget narratives! Please review guidance on our website (https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/nfwf-detailed-budget-narrative-guide.pdf)

Resources

Applicant Tip Sheet

UPDATED: Proposal Narrative

DWCF Toolbox
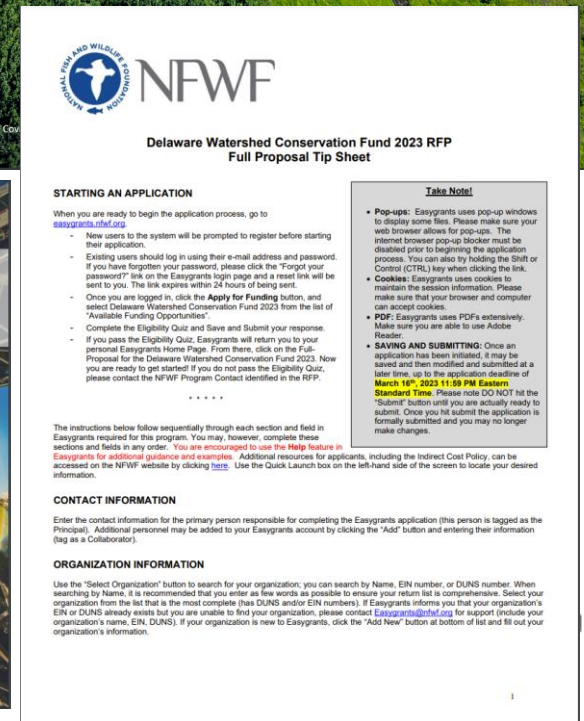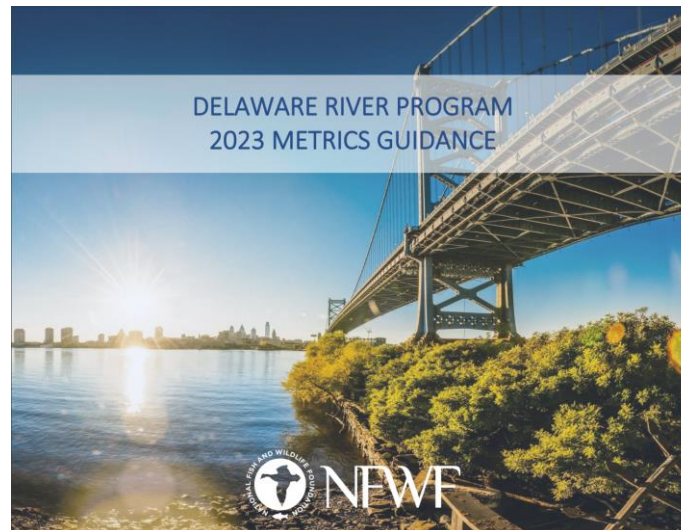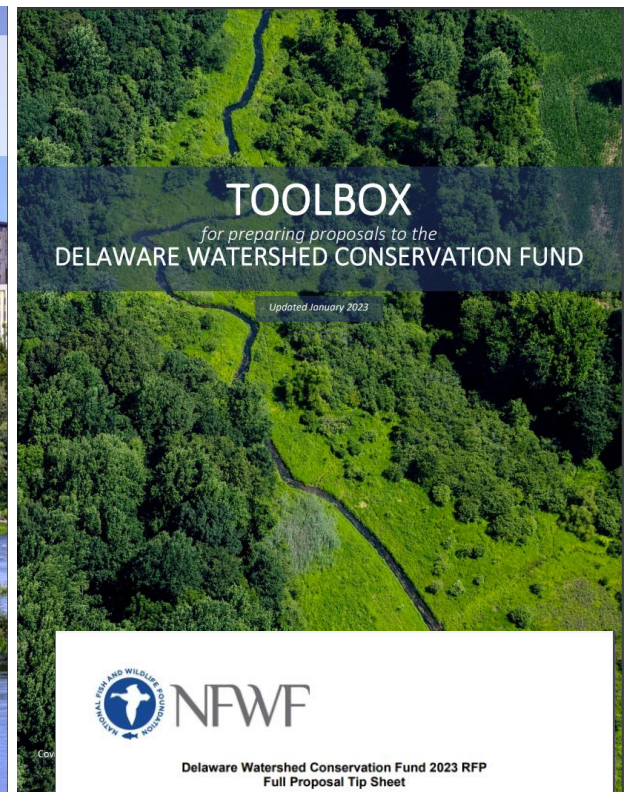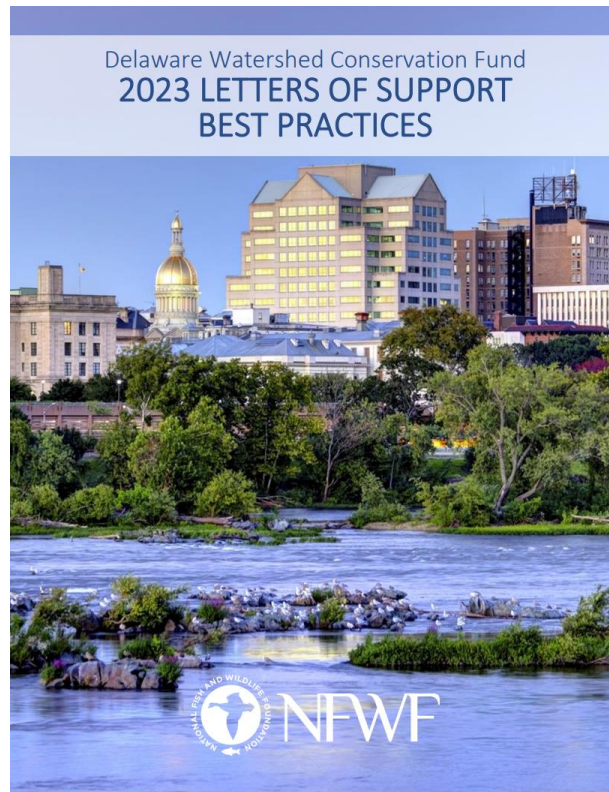- Nature's Network
- Species-specific plans

Letters of Support Best Practices

Metrics Guidance

Proposal Tools Webinar (2/14 at 11AM)

CDRW DEIJ Resource Hub

Proposal labs

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Frequently Asked Question – 1

Q: Why is the grant funding level *approximately* $14.4 million?

A: Final funding amounts will be determined through the federal budget process. Congress also allocated funding to the DWCF through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law; about $4.5 million is available for grants. We conservatively anticipate the final amount available for grants will be around $14.4 million. Funding decisions will be made based on the level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

Frequently Asked Question – 2

Q: What is eligible for match?

A: Match includes all in-kind and cash contributions to the implementation of the project.

- DWCF projects must have a minimum 1:1 <u>non-federal</u> match except for the capacity building grants, which has a 20% match requirement.
- All match should be in support of, or directly contribute to, activities associated with the proposed work
- Funds associated with project parcel easements or acquisitions can be included as long as the funds are utilized during the grant period
- Match can include cash contributions and in-kind contributions including staff time or volunteer hours

Frequently Asked Question – 3

Q: What's all this about "project context" for projects? Won't you just know that restoration and conservation is important?!

A: While NFWF, our funding partners, and our proposal reviewers are pretty awesome, we have not yet perfected our mind-reading skills. Please do make every effort to tell us why this is the right time for this project, why these are the right actions to take, and why it should happen in this particular geography. Also describe any additional plans (municipal, federal, state, etc) and goals this project helps deliver. But do not upload a pile of those plans with your proposal. We don't want 350-page proposal packets. If you are submitting a proposal for planning and design, please be sure to clearly characterize the final project and what implementation will achieve.

Frequently Asked Question – 4

Q: There are a few metrics we'd like to select that really showcase the potential impact of our project, but they seem complicated to calculate. Where do we begin?

A: Metrics should be reasonable, achievable, and tell a story about your project. There is a "toolbox" for DWCF applicants that offers some resources for establishing project context and calculating project impact.

Add metric notes! They help provide a clearer picture of your project for reviewers, and you will be required to enter them in later!

Frequently Asked Question – 5

Q: What about design and planning? Can we request funding for these kinds of activities?

A: Yes! Design and planning are eligible projects, and there is approximately $2M available. To make your proposal more competitive, make sure to articulate its ultimate potential and that the proposal shows how there is future possibility for the project, that the groundwork is underway, and partners and agencies have been contacted.

Frequently Asked Question – 6

Q: Should project partners submit a single proposal or will NFWF consider multiple proposals from the project partners?

A: One of the evaluation criteria for NFWF's proposal review is the strength of the partnership assembled to implement the project.

– It would be beneficial for partners to ensure that proposals are well coordinated, fully supported and complementary. Whether a single, larger proposal is submitted or multiple is up to the partners.

– It would NOT be ideal for competing proposals addressing the same project or approach to be received.

– Reach out to program contacts to discuss specific circumstances if needed.

Frequently Asked Question – 7

Q: Is the budget narrative really all that important?

A: <u>Yes!</u> The budget narrative allows reviewers to understand what will be accomplished through grant funds, and what portion of the project will be covered by matching funds. You will be required to complete a budget narrative if you are selected for funding, and this can delay contracting. Save yourself some time and include the budget narratives from the beginning!

Final Tips for Applicants

1. Print/download the tip sheet and use it as a reference
2. Re-read the RFP and reference the linked-information provided
3. These are competitive grants; projects should address all criteria, respond to all requirements and have a "wow" factor
4. Include lots of context and details—do not assume reviewers know things about your project!
5. Don't skimp on the metrics notes. Read the new Metrics Guidance documents for specific metric instructions.
6. Submit your proposal ON OR BEFORE March 16th
7. Note that NFWF staff will not be in the office at 11:59 pm on March 16th!
8. Reach out if you need help

RESOURCES:
- Metrics Guidance
- Letters of Support Best Practices
- Toolbox

Proposals are Due
Thursday, March 16th!!

Awards will be announced in
early-mid August

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How to Apply to NFWF – EasyGrants System

www.easygrants.nfwf.org

1. Log in with existing email and password
   - Register now if you do not have one – this will allow for time to familiarize yourself with the system
   - If you have trouble logging in, use the help feature
2. Turn off your pop-up blockers
3. Download and use the tip sheet available on the program webpage
4. You can work on the narrative offline – download the template and upload when you're finished
5. Please be as specific as possible with mapping AND providing location information on your project
6. Click save frequently
7. Input budget line-item narratives!
8. Make sure all your check marks are green; do not click SUBMIT until you are completely finished

Submitting a Proposal
Step One: Create an Account

Let's try it...

Thank you!