LONG ISLAND SOUND FUTURES FUND

2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, May 10, 2023 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF) is seeking proposals to restore the health and living resources of Long Island Sound (Sound) with approximately $10 million for grants in 2023. The program is managed by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in collaboration with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Long Island Sound Study (LISS). Major funding is from EPA through the LISS with additional funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Avangrid Foundation.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

All proposed projects must be within the Long Island Sound watershed boundary as shown in *Figure 1*. Project eligibility is also limited by geography depending on the project type, as described below.

Figure 1: Long Island Sound Watershed

Please review the interactive *Long Island Sound Watershed Map* for boundaries referenced below.

- **Habitat restoration projects** *must* fall within the *Long Island Sound Coastal Watershed boundary in Connecticut (CT) and New York (NY).*
- **Resilience, water quality and fish passage projects** may be in any portion of the *Long Island Sound Study Area in CT and NY.*
- **Education and outreach projects** may be in any portion of the *Long Island Sound Study Area in CT and NY*. Projects may also occur in communities outside this boundary in those states as long as content concerns the health and living resources of the Sound.
- **Nitrogen/nutrient prevention projects** may occur anywhere in the Sound watershed of CT, NY, Massachusetts (MA), New Hampshire (NH), and Vermont (VT) as shown in the *Long Island Sound Watershed map.*

OTHER FUNDING PROGRAMS

Organizations are also encouraged to consider applying to the New England Forests and Rivers Fund which seeks to sustain healthy forests and rivers that provide habitat for diverse bird populations, as well as freshwater and diadromous fish populations. Other national grant programs worth considering for funding are the America the Beautiful Challenge for locally led ecosystem restoration projects that invest in watershed restoration, resilience, equitable access, workforce development, corridors and connectivity, and collaborative conservation; and the National Coastal Resilience Fund which seeks to restore, increase and strengthen natural infrastructure to protect coastal communities while also enhancing habitat for fish and wildlife.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The LISFF supports efforts to test innovative approaches to conservation, deliver transformative projects and support people and communities who value the Sound and take a direct role in its future. A road map guiding investments under the LISFF is the Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan 2020-2024 Update (CCMP). The Long Island Sound Futures Fund invests in projects under three CCMP themes shown below, in CCMP Implementation Actions (IAs) associated with each theme, and in three CCMP cross-cutting principles: resilience to climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice. The most competitive proposals will be those that incorporate the theme(s), IA(s) and cross-cutting principle(s) of the CCMP.

Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects—especially those implemented in underserved, under-resourced or overburdened communities—should engage community-level partners to help design, implement, and sustain the work to secure maximum benefits for communities and post-grant award.

CCMP THEME: Clean Waters and Healthy Watersheds – Improve water quality by reducing nitrogen pollution, combined sewer overflows, impervious cover, stormwater runoff, and point and nonpoint source loading into Long Island Sound through:

- Implementation of “shovel-ready” projects that result in quantifiable pollutant prevention. The most competitive projects will be those that address water quality at larger or more

comprehensive-scale such as at the level of a neighborhood, waterfront or downtown. Proposals will be asked to describe plans for long-term maintenance.

- Planning activities that set-the-stage for implementation of water quality projects including: 1) community engagement, planning and prioritization; 2) feasibility, suitability or alternatives analyses; 3) site assessment and conceptual design; and 4) final design and permits.

Examples of project types and actions:

- Green infrastructure (GI)/Low Impact Development (LID) such as:
    - Projects that filter and infiltrate stormwater pollution at larger-scale such as at the level of a neighborhood, waterfront or downtown and/or that are part of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) management including disconnecting the amount of impervious surface and implementing stormwater management practices with the aim of improving water quality in local waterways that flow to the Sound. Proposals must: 1) document the direct benefit to Long Island Sound in terms of reducing downstream nitrogen pollution loading; and 2) describe resources for long-term maintenance of the site e.g., equipment exists to maintain pervious surfaces, resources exist to maintain plantings, swales and basins receive periodic cleaning etc.
    - Projects at a smaller-scale and closer to the source of that pollution such as raingardens, bioswales, pervious surfaces etc. To be competitive these projects must: 1) document the direct benefit to Long Island Sound in terms of reducing downstream nitrogen pollution loading; 2) provide formal education about the water quality benefits of the project to the community; and 3) describe resources for long-term maintenance of the site e.g., equipment exists to maintain pervious surfaces, resources exist to maintain plantings, swales and basins receive periodic cleaning etc.
    - Technical assistance to help local communities build capacity to plan for or to implement green infrastructure/LID.
- Installation of decentralized on-site wastewater treatment systems that more effectively treat nitrogen.
- Low-cost retrofits at wastewater treatment facilities such as optimization and process improvements.
- Alternatives to chemical and nitrogen-intensive turf and landscaping fertilizer and pesticide use.
- Reduction or prevention of single-use plastic and other water/land-based consumer debris, abandoned and lost fishing/aquaculture gear, and microplastics and microfibers.
- Watershed planning addressing water quality problems including nitrogen and sediments. Plans should include EPA's nine elements – see the Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans.
- Nutrient bioextraction.
- In-stream restoration to increase nutrient processing, and to reduce erosion.
- Replacing or right-sizing culverts or otherwise improving road and stream crossings to reduce downstream erosion of nutrients.
- Projects to accelerate adoption of agricultural conservation practices that reduce nutrient runoff such as:
    - Technical assistance or technical service to engage rural landowners and farmers in design and delivery of nitrogen prevention projects.

- Regenerative agriculture practices.
- Soil health practices and management systems that combine improved tillage and/or pasture management, cover crops, crop and livestock rotations, and other practices to increase soil fertility while improving the capacity of crops and soils to reduce runoff and increase nutrient uptake.
- Precision nutrient management systems that fine-tune the rate, source, method, and timing of nutrient applications to maintain or increase crop yields, minimize nutrient input costs and nutrient losses to surface and groundwater.

Projects in the Upper Basin states (MA, NH, VT) of the Long Island Sound Watershed must have a specific outcome related to nitrogen prevention as a result of project activities through:

- Implementation of "shovel-ready" projects that result in quantifiable pollutant prevention. Proposals will be asked to describe plans for long-term maintenance of the site.
- Planning for activities that set-the-stage for implementation of water quality projects including: 1) community engagement, planning and prioritization; 2) feasibility, suitability or alternatives analyses; 3) site assessment and conceptual design; and 4) final design and permits.
- Projects must document the benefit to downstream Long Island Sound such as by indicating how the project addresses a significant source of nitrogen/nutrient pollution to Long Island Sound, and how the design of the project and its implement will effectively reduce downstream pollution loading.

Examples of project types and activities include:

- Green infrastructure/Low Impact Development (LID) such as:
  - Projects that filter and infiltrate stormwater pollution at larger-scale such as at the level of a neighborhood, waterfront or downtown and/or that are part of Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) management including disconnecting the amount of impervious surface and implementing stormwater management practices with the aim of improving water quality in local waterways that flow to the Sound. The projects must: 1) document the direct benefit to Long Island Sound in terms of reducing downstream nitrogen pollution loading; and 2) describe resources for long-term maintenance of the site e.g., equipment exists to maintain pervious surfaces, resources exist to maintain plantings, swales and basins receive periodic cleaning etc.
  - Projects at a smaller-scale and closer to the source of that pollution such as raingardens, bioswales, pervious surfaces etc. To be competitive these projects must: 1) document the direct benefit to Long Island Sound in terms of reducing nitrogen pollution loading; 2) provide formal education about the water quality benefits of the project to the community; and 3) describe resources for long-term maintenance of the *site e.g.,* equipment exists to maintain pervious surfaces, resources exist to maintain plantings, swales and basins receive periodic cleaning etc.
  - Technical assistance to help local communities build capacity to plan for or to implement green infrastructure/LID.
- Installation of decentralized on-site wastewater treatment systems that more effectively treat nitrogen.
- Low-cost retrofits at wastewater treatment facilities such as optimization and process improvements.

- Alternatives to chemical and nitrogen-intensive turf and landscaping fertilizer use.
- Watershed planning addressing water quality problems including nitrogen and sediment. Plans should include EPA's nine elements – see the Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans.
- Riparian and forested buffer and channel bank vegetation enhancement to slow and intercept polluted surface runoff.
- Stream channel reconnection to historic floodplains and adjacent wetlands to promote nutrient removal and to reduce erosion.
- Freshwater wetland restoration to promote nutrient removal and to reduce erosion.
- In-stream restoration to increase nutrient processing, and to reduce erosion.
- Replacing or right-sizing culverts or otherwise improving road and stream crossings to reduce downstream erosion of nutrients.
- Projects to accelerate adoption of agricultural conservation practices that reduce nutrient runoff such as:
    - Technical assistance or technical service to engage rural landowners and farmers in design and delivery of nitrogen prevention projects.
    - Regenerative agriculture practices.
    - Soil health practices and management systems that combine improved tillage and/or pasture management, cover crops, crop and livestock rotations, and other practices to increase soil fertility while improving the capacity of crops and soils to reduce runoff and increase nutrient uptake.
    - Precision nutrient management systems that fine-tune the rate, source, method, and timing of nutrient applications to maintain or increase crop yields, minimize nutrient input costs and nutrient losses to surface and groundwater.

CCMP THEME: Thriving Habitats and Abundant Wildlife – Restore coastal habitats to maintain resilience and function and to support populations of fish, birds and wildlife by:

- Implementing "shovel-ready" projects that result in quantifiable habitat acres restored. Proposals will be asked to describe plans for long-term maintenance. *Please review the LISS Habitat Restoration Guidelines to inform development of a proposal.*
- Planning that sets-the-stage for implementation of habitat restoration projects including: 1) community engagement, planning and prioritization; 2) feasibility, suitability or alternatives analyses; 3) site assessment and conceptual design; and 4) final design and permits.
- Fostering diverse, balanced and abundant populations of fish, birds and wildlife.

Examples of project types and actions:

- Habitat enhancement or restoration of Important Coastal Habitat Types targeted by the LISS with a particular focus on beach and dune, tidal marsh, shellfish reef, coastal forest and eelgrass.
- Habitat enhancement or restoration of Important Coastal Habitat Types targeted by the LISS of benefit to Species of Greatest Conservation Need associated with that habitat and Long Island Sound particularly forage species, shorebirds, seabirds and river herring.
- Nature-based or hybrid "green-gray" resilience and restoration tools such as living shorelines, thin layer deposition, oyster castles/reef balls etc. focused on restoring important habitats such as beach and dune, tidal marsh, shellfish reefs, and coastal forest.

- Shellfish and reef restoration to establish self-sustaining populations and/or to create or enhance benthic and reef structure for marine species. Activities may include: 1) identification of the most suitable habitat to target restoration; 2) increasing oyster larvae and spat production; 3) development of shell recycling programs; 4) coastal infrastructure strategies that aim to restore or enhance subtidal and intertidal aquatic beds to provide habitat and shoreline protection through wave dissipation (*e.g.*, reef balls, oyster castles, living shorelines, hybrid cordgrass/ribbed mussel shoreline stabilization etc.); 5) development or expansion of spawner sanctuaries -- areas that are closed to harvest, allowing shellfish to propagate; and 6) partnership development with activities that aim to scale-up restoration and build regional capacity to restore reefs and build self-sustaining populations of shellfish. This would occur through enhanced collaboration and coordination across organizations at broader regional and landscape scales. *Shellfish and reef areas proposed to be restored cannot be harvested for commercial or recreational purposes.*
- Invasive *terrestrial* species control. Proposals may request funds for: 1) first-time intensive efforts to treat invasive plants with subsequent re-treatment of secondary invasion and encroachment by invasive plants. This treatment regime must be coupled with development of a long-term stewardship and maintenance plan; 2) treatment of invasive plants that follows-on prior primary and secondary intensive treatment. Projects will only be considered for funding in this category with an existing stewardship and maintenance plan; and 3) spot-treatment of invasive plants in areas that have a stewardship and maintenance plan. *One-off efforts to treat existing or new acres without an existing or planning for a stewardship and maintenance plan or planning for are not eligible for funding.*
- Watershed or greater scale planning to address barriers to fish passage to include 1) identification, assessment and inventory of dams, undersized or failing culverts, and barriers to fish passage; 2) prioritization of barriers for removal that seeks to restore connectivity throughout entire watersheds, especially where fish have been cut-off from key spawning, rearing and refuge habitats; 3) use of data to update existing tools and databases including state inventories and the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative database; 3) active engagement of regulatory agencies in overcoming challenges to addressing barriers; 4) development of outreach tools and technical assistance to owners and managers about addressing their barriers; and 5) partnership development with activities that aim to scale-up restoration and build regional capacity to remove barriers and restore riverine migratory corridors. This would occur through enhanced collaboration and coordination across organizations at broader regional and landscape scales.
- Reducing barriers (under-sized or perched culverts and small derelict or under-utilized dams) to fish passage for Long Island Sound diadromous fish such as river herring and catadromous fish such as American eel. The most competitive projects will be those with the greatest direct benefit to the Sound, open the greatest miles to fish passage, provide key spawning, rearing, and refuge habitats and promote species dispersal. *If the barrier is one of multiple barriers that block downstream movement of fish to the Sound, the project must provide information about planning to remove the other barriers.*
- Strategies to engage human communities to share the shore and reduce disturbance along shorelines also used by beach nesting species. Strategies are described in the Atlantic Flyway Shorebirds Business Plan.

CCMP THEME Sustainable and Resilient Communities – This CCMP theme has two major categories of fundable activities. Projects that 1) sustain the ecological balance of the Sound in a healthy, productive, and resilient state for the benefit of people, wildlife and the natural environment; and 2) support vibrant, informed, and engaged communities that use, appreciate, and help protect and sustain the Sound.

Resilience & Sustainability. Nature-based or green-gray hybrid projects that combine resilience, community, and conservation including:

- Implementation of "shovel-ready" projects that build resilience in communities. The most competitive projects will provide dual benefits – for human community resilience and habitat, fish and wildlife.
- Planning activities that set-the-stage for implementation of resilience projects including: 1) community engagement, planning and prioritization; 2) feasibility, suitability or alternatives analyses; 3) site assessment and conceptual design; and 4) final design and permits.

Examples of project types and actions:

- Restoring or enhancing habitat to improve community resilience including proposals that provide natural and nature-based solutions[1] to protect coastal and inland communities from the impact of storms, floods, and other natural hazards and to enable them to recover more quickly. For coastal communities, some examples of projects may include restoration of coastal marshes and wetlands, coastal forests, living shorelines, and oyster reefs. For inland communities, examples of projects may include hazard-focused stormwater management approaches that reduce localized flooding from high precipitation events and floodplain restoration and reconnection with measurable downstream flood reduction benefits.
- Green infrastructure/Low Impact Development proposals that combine gray infrastructure with nature-based solutions to create hybrid systems that improve habitat and community resilience to climate impacts by increasing stormwater storage, reducing flooding and enhancing community green space.
- New or updated municipal, watershed or regional resilience/sustainability/natural hazard mitigation plans that evaluate the vulnerability of critical community infrastructure and natural areas and develop strategies for making this infrastructure and these areas resilient to hazardous events (sea level rise, flood and/or weather events).
- Technical assistance to help local communities plan for or implement resilience through nature-based infrastructure.

Public Engagement, Knowledge and Stewardship. Support vibrant, informed, and engaged communities that use, appreciate, and help protect and sustain the Sound. *Projects providing hands-on conservation experiences will be more competitive.*

Examples of project types and actions:

- Public engagement in stewardship of local natural resources.

[1] The term "nature-based solutions" is defined as natural, engineered and hybrid ("green-gray") approaches that strategically protect, restore, sustainably manage or mimic ecosystems to conserve or restore ecosystem functions and natural processes with the goal of reducing community exposure to natural hazards and climate stressors and enhancing habitats for fish and wildlife.

- Programs that foster, support, or develop community buy-in and meaningful inclusion in local environmental management projects.
- Programs to increase appreciation of the Sound including in underprivileged and underserved communities.
- Environmental Justice initiatives and collaborations that promote equitable access, appreciation and understanding of Long Island Sound.
- Campaigns and activities to build public awareness and direct engagement reducing use and impact of plastic and other water/land-based consumer debris, abandoned and lost fishing/aquaculture gear, microplastics and microfibers prevention or reduction.
- Native plant landscaping guidance and training that encourages alternatives to chemical and nutrient intensive landscapes.
- Long Island Sound environmental and conservation-related classroom or informal instruction *Please note LISFF does not support development of new curriculum. See LISS Educational Resources for examples of available information and existing curriculum.*
- Behavior-change campaigns, including Community-Based Social Marketing.

PROJECT METRICS AND CCMP IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the LISFF has a list of metrics titled "Activities and Outcomes" in the Easygrants online application. *Applicants must select at least one and no more than three* of the most relevant metrics for their project (all possible project metrics for this program are shown on the table below). Additionally, in the project narrative section of the LISFF application you *must* identify the specific CCMP Implementation Action(s) associated with your project metrics. The IAs associated with each project metric is provided in the document *LISFF Metrics and Implementation Action Tracking Guidance.* If you think an applicable metric or IA has not been provided, please send an email to LISFF23@nfwf.org to discuss alternatives.

POLLUTION PREVENTION/REDUCTION		
Project Activity	**Recommended Metric**	**Metric Guidance**
BMP implementation for nitrogen/nutrient reduction	Lbs. N avoided (annually)	Enter lbs. of nitrogen prevented from entering system annually. Use one of the Calculator Resources to estimate pollution reduction/prevention.
BMP implementation for phosphorus reduction	Lbs. P avoided (annually)	Enter lbs. of phosphorus prevented from entering system annually. Use one of the Calculator Resources to estimate pollution reduction/prevention.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Lbs. sediment avoided (annually)	Enter lbs. of sediment prevented from entering system annually. Use one of the Calculator Resources to estimate pollution prevention/prevention.
BMP implementation for stormwater runoff prevention	Volume stormwater prevented	Enter volume (in gallons) of stormwater prevented from entering the water body annually. Use one of the Calculator Resources to estimate pollution prevention/reduction.
BMP implementation for nitrogen/nutrient or sediment prevention	# Septic system upgrades	Enter # septic system upgrades.

BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Acres with BMPs	Enter the # of acres with BMPs. In the NOTES section, indicate the type of BMP(s) (e.g. manure storage). Use one of the Calculator Resources to estimate pollution prevention/reduction.
Erosion control for nitrogen/nutrient or sediment prevention	Miles restored	Enter # of miles restored.
BMP or strategy for marine debris reduction or prevention	# Lbs. of marine debris removed	Enter the number of pounds of single-use plastic and other water/land-based consumer debris, abandoned and lost fishing/aquaculture gear, microplastics and microfibers that has been removed from the environment and properly disposed of.
Riparian restoration	Square miles restored	Enter number of sq. miles restored.
Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development/Riparian/Floodplain restoration	# Trees planted	Enter the number of trees planted. In the NOTES, 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.
Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development/Riparian/Floodplain restoration	Sq. ft. impervious surface removed	Enter square foot of impervious surface removed or retrofitted.
Green Infrastructure/Low Impact Development/Riparian/Floodplain restoration	Sq. ft. of green infrastructure	Enter the square footage of green infrastructure installed. In NOTES section: describe the type of green infrastructure.
HABITAT RESTORATION OR SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES ACTIVITIES		
Habitat Restoration *(Resilience)*	Acres of living shoreline restored	Enter the acres of living shoreline to be restored. In NOTES section: describe the method used e.g., oyster reefs/castles, reef balls etc.
Habitat Restoration – Removal of invasives *(Invasives)*	Acres restored *(use this metric for first time invasives control)*	Enter # acres of invasives removed. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (e.g., Japanese knotweed, porcelain-berry, mugwort etc.). Desired dominant vegetation (e.g., Coastal Forest, Coastal Grassland, Salt/Tidal or Freshwater Marsh, Beach/Dune etc.), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
Habitat Restoration – Removal of Invasives *(Invasives)*	Acres retreated *(use this metric for re-treatment or spot treatments)*	Enter the number of acres of invasive species re-treated (having received previous treatment). In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (e.g., Japanese knotweed, porcelain-berry, mugwort etc.), desired dominant vegetation (e.g., Coastal Forest, Coastal Grassland, Salt/Tidal or Freshwater Marsh, Beach/Dune etc.), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
Floodplain restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored.
Critical facilities or infrastructure protected	# of critical facilities or infrastructure	Enter the # of critical infrastructure assets or facilities within the radius of enhanced protection.
Marine habitat restoration	# Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored. In the NOTES: describe the specific type of habitat restored e.g., shellfish reef, eelgrass.

Land restoration – coastal forest	# Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored. In the NOTES: describe the specific type of habitat restored e.g., coastal forest. Specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, shrubland).
Beach and dune habitat improvements	# Acres restored	Enter the number of acres of beach and dune restored.
Wetland restoration	# Acres restored	Enter the number of acres of wetland (not riparian or instream) habitat restored. In the NOTES: Specify landcover prior to restoration (Marsh, Tidal Marsh); and indicate % of vegetation on pre-project site (0-20%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 82-100%).
Fish passage improvements	Miles of stream opened	Enter # of miles opened. Enter total # of miles opened to improve aquatic organism passage. Only include the miles of main stem & smaller tributaries connected until the next barrier upstream (or headwaters), but NOT lakes, ponds, or distance downstream from the barrier removed.
Fish passage improvements	# passage barriers rectified	Enter the # of in-stream barriers removed or rectified as part of this grant to improve aquatic organism passage and/or flooding. If multiple barriers exist at one specific location, please list "1" and list each individual barrier in the notes.
Acres of lake/pond habitat opened	# Acres of lake/pond habitat opened	Enter the number of acres of lake/pond habitat opened.
PLANNING ALL TYPES		
Management or Governance Planning	# Plans developed	Enter the number of plans developed that had input from multiple stakeholders. In NOTES section: describe the type of plan, campaign or strategy e.g., watershed, feasibility/suitability/alternatives analyses, conceptual or engineered plan.
Planning	# Acres assessed for improved management	Enter the number of acres assessed for improved management.
Planning	# Engineering and design plans developed	Enter the number of Engineering and Design plans developed. Generally there will be 1 plan per project to be constructed.
ACCESS/OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT		
Access Improvements	# Access pts. developed/improved	Enter the number of public access points developed/improved.
Access Improvements	# Acres with public access	Enter the number of acres now open to public access.
Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance	# of orgs contributing to goals	Enter the number of organizations and other relevant stakeholders contributing to the initiative's conservation goals.
Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance	# People reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities	Enter the number of people reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities, In NOTES section: describe participant e.g., local community members, leaders and other relevant stakeholders, general public, farmer, students/teachers.
Volunteer Participation	# Volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers participating in projects.

Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance	# of Workshops, webinars, meetings	Enter the number of workshops, webinars or meetings. In the NOTES section: describe the type of event.
Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance	# Public education events	Enter the number of public education events completed
SPECIES AND HABITAT MANAGEMENT		
Habitat Management	# Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres under improved management as a result of mitigating recreational disturbance to shorebirds and seabirds. In the NOTES section: list the species benefitted.

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local government, municipal government, Tribal Governments and Organizations, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies, businesses, and unincorporated individuals.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- Research projects. Consider the LISS Research Grant Program.
- Development of new educational curriculum.
- Support for fellowships and/or tuition support or reimbursement.
- Marketing efforts serving to generally promote the applicant organization and its initiatives.
- Land acquisition projects.
- One-off efforts to treat or control invasive plants without an existing or planned for long-term stewardship and maintenance plan.
- General monitoring to assess conditions or to identify pollution sources.
- Aquatic invasive species control.
- **Funding for food, t-shirts and promotional items** (e.g., key chains, coffee mugs, pens etc.).
- **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.
- 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 AND MATCH

With funding of approximately $10 million for projects in 2023, there are four funding categories under the LISFF each with a different range of grant funding.

- **Implementation Projects:** $50,000 to $1.5 million for projects with particularly high environmental community benefit relative to cost, including:
  - Water quality, habitat restoration, and resilience projects.
  - Projects with the greatest promise to demonstrate, influence, pilot, innovate, and/or provide a proof of concept with the aim of accelerating local and regional water quality improvements, natural resource restoration, coastal resilience, Environmental Justice and/or community and public outreach and engagement.

- **Design/Planning Projects:** $50,000 to $500,000 for:
  - Water quality or habitat restoration projects.
  - Watershed plans.
  - Community resilience/sustainability/natural hazard mitigation plans.

Examples of planning and implementation project types which may be funded by LISFF are in *Figure 2*. Each of the boxes shown in the figure is understood to represent a distinct phase of project development or delivery. *Applicants for planning grants should apply under only one of the project types that best meets the project purpose and activities.*

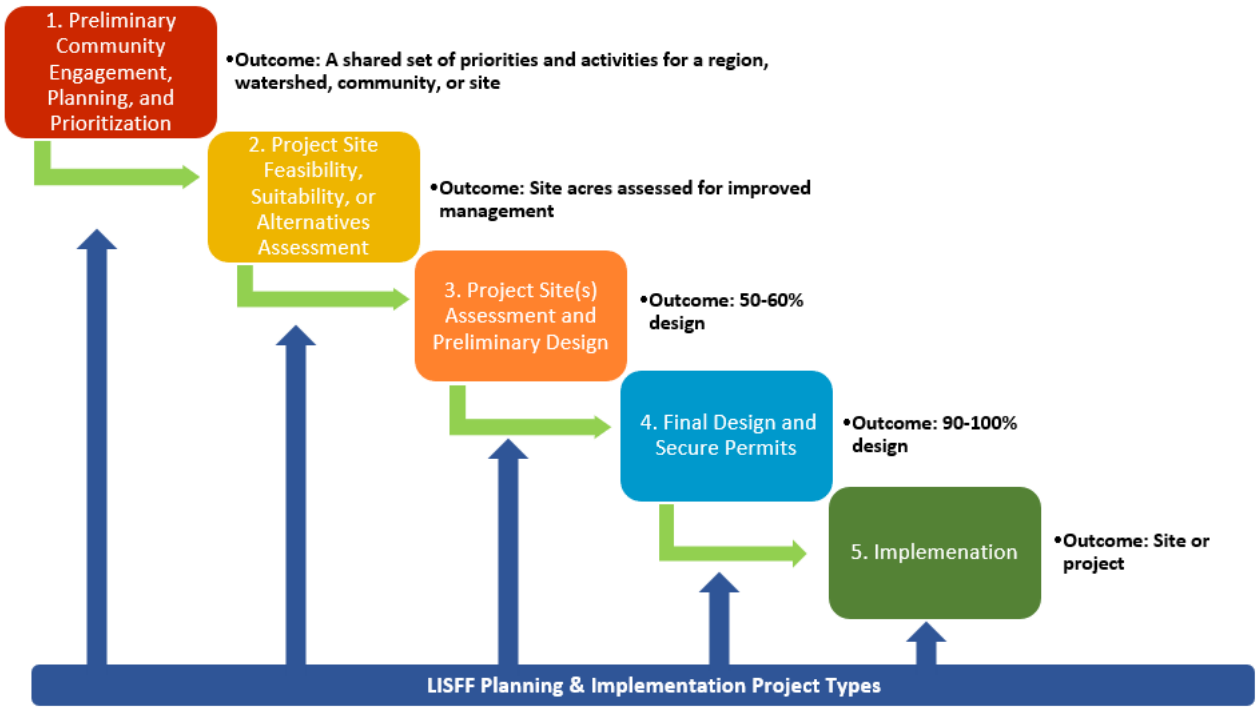

Figure 2: LISFF Planning and Implementation Project Types

- **Education and Public Participation Grants:** $50,000 to $250,000.

Project Period: Projects must start within six months and be completed within 24 months after notification of grant award. Larger-scale complex implementation or partnership development projects must start within six months and be completed within thirty-six months after notification of grant award. Notification of award is projected to be November 2023. **Project start date cannot be before October 1, 2023.**

Match Requirements: Grants require a minimum matching contribution valued at 25% of the "Requested Amount" from the LISFF. For example, if you request $100,000 from LISFF, then the required match is $25,000. Matching contributions may include cash, in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. *The amount of matching funds offered is one criterion considered during the review process, and projects that meet or exceed the required match will be more competitive.*

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness, and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated equally based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

- **Program Goals and Priorities** – Project contributes to the Implementation Actions of the CCMP and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more the three CCMP cross-cutting principles (resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability and/or environmental justice).
- **Technical Merit** - Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical, and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate experts and partners in project planning, design or implementation to ensure activities are technically sound and feasible.
- **Community Impact** – Partners and engages collaboratively with diverse local community members, leaders and community-based organizations and other relevant stakeholders to implement and ensure the long-term sustainability and success of the proposed project. Proposal describes 1) integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed actions; 2) partners and roles; 3) community characteristics of the project area and communities impacted; 4) community outreach and engagement activities; and 5) means to monitor and measure. Proposal provides demographic data and letters from community partners demonstrating commitment to and engagement in project activities as proposed.
- **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.
- **Match –** Grants require a minimum matching contribution valued at 25% of the "Requested Amount" from the LISFF. For example, if you request $100,000 from LISFF, then the required match is $25,000. Matching contributions may include cash, in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other

tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. Larger match ratios are encouraged and make proposals more competitive.

- **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 may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget. 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.
- **Long-term Sustainability –** Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time.

OTHER

Applicant Demographic Information – In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic information on applicants and their communities via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions. For more details, please see the tip sheet and 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 a 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 those 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.* sequestration, avoided emissions), environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions consist of non-federal cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance (project start date cannot be before October 1, 2023). Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged.

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 and the Long Island Sound Study the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF's and the LISS financial support for the grant in press releases, publications, and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF and the LISS 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.

Projects funded under this RFP will be subject to the Buy America Sourcing requirements under the Build America, Buy America Act requirements of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) (P.L. 117-58, §§70911-70917). Certain limited exclusions may apply if the proposal meets either of the following conditions:

1. The restoration projects will not require any iron and steel, manufactured products, and non-ferrous construction materials covered by the Act to be permanently affixed to, consumed in, or incorporated into the project, and
2. The total project proposal costs less than $250,000 of federal grant funding.

The Buy America preference will apply to the entire project, including portions funded using non-Federal funds (match). For legal definitions and sourcing requirements, consult EPA's Build America, Buy America website and the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Memorandum M-22-11, Initial Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure. EPA's Office of Water Implementation Procedures provides program-specific guidance relevant to water infrastructure projects.

Quality Assurance – If a project involves monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for review by NFWF and review and approval by EPA before any data collection activities may commence. Examples of the types of data collection or use which requires a QAPP includes (but is not limited to): New Primary Data; Existing Secondary Data use (new use for data collected for a different purpose, whether by the same or different groups); Water or other Environmental Media Monitoring; Modeling;

GIS/Spatial Analysis; Data associated with Assessment, Development or Design of Project Plans (e.g., fish passage, nitrogen prevention/reduction, green infrastructure, habitat restoration, resilience), Development or Design of Watershed or Community Plans (e.g., watershed, hazard mitigation/resilience), and surveys/workshops. All QAPPs produced are public information.

Applicants ***must*** budget time and resources in their LISFF proposal to complete this task. Plan to submit a QAPP *at least* four months in advance of data collection. The timing of review, comment and by NFWF and for EPA review and approval is dependent upon the quality of the draft QAPP submission and may involve several iterations. General assistance will be available to projects to help with scoping and review of draft QAPPs. For more information, follow the link to the LISFF Quality Assurance Project Plan Guidance and EPA QA. Contact LISFF23@nfwf.org if you have any questions about QAPP requirements.

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 under "Application Information" tab at Long Island Sound Futures Fund webpage.

Proposal Due Date	May 10, 2023, 11:59PM, Eastern
Review Period	Summer/Fall 2023
Awards Announced	November 2023

WORKSHOPS & WEBINARS

Workshop or Webinar Location	Register	Date and Time
MA Webinar: Municipal Applicants	Register	March 2, 2023 10:00am - Noon
MA Webinar: Agricultural Applicants	Register	March 2, 2023 1:00pm to 2:30pm
NY & CT Webinar	Register	March 15, 2023 1:30pm – 3:00pm
MA, NH, VT Webinar	Register	March 16, 2023 1:30pm – 3:00pm
NH Workshop: Pembroke	Register	March 23, 2023 9:00am – Noon

CT Workshop: Hartford	Register	March 27, 2023 9:30 – 1:00pm
CT Workshop: Groton	Register	March 28, 2023 9:30am – 11:00am
CT Workshop: New Haven	Register	March 28, 2023 2:00pm– 3:30pm
CT Workshop: Bridgeport	Register	March 29, 2023 10:30am – Noon
NY Workshop: Huntington	Register	April 11, 2023 9:00am – 10:30am
NY Workshop: Bronx	Register	April 18, 2023 9:30am – 11:00am
NY Workshop: New Rochelle	Register	April 18, 2023 1:30pm – 3:00pm

Do you need help writing a grant application?

Apply to the Long Island Sound Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program! This funding opportunity is open to municipalities and community organizations to facilitate the hiring of a grant writing contractor to assist with the development of a grant application for sustainable and resilience-focused projects within the LIS coastal boundary (within Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk counties, Western Connecticut, and Eastern Connecticut). Funding is to be awarded in a range of $5,000-$9,950 per application directly to the applicant's selected contractor on a cost reimbursable basis and match is not required. Find all the program details on the NYSG website and the CTSG website. Applicants who are looking for assistance with the LIS Futures Fund grant are encouraged to apply to the LIS Resilience Grant Writing Assistance Program by March 31st, 2023. For more information, contact: LISresilience@gmail.com

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.

2. Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.

3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded here. Additional information about prior grants can be found 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 or to share project ideas, please contact:
LISFF23@nfwf.org

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.