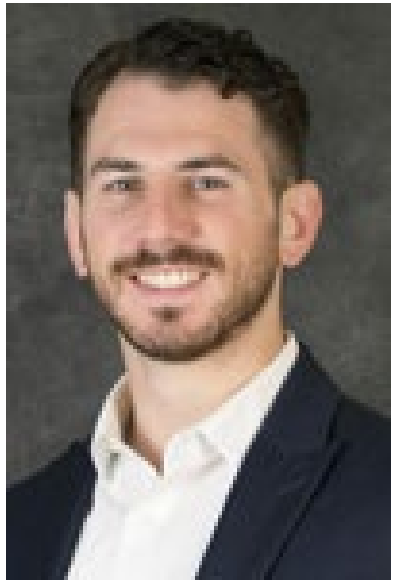
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
2024 Lower MS Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund
Applicant Webinar

February 14, 2024

Bottomland hardwood forest | Credit: Bruce Reid

NFWF

Today's Presenters



Zack Bernstein

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Program Director, Southern Forests

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Webinar Guidelines

- All attendees will be muted for the duration of the webinar.
- Please type your questions into the “questions” box in the webinar controls on the right side of your screen. NFWF staff will answer these questions during several breaks in the presentation, but you can type them in any time. Everyone will be able to hear the answers.
- Don’t be shy. If you have a question, someone else is thinking it, too.
- If you experience a technical glitch, please type it into the chat/question box.
- **The Webinar is being recorded. We will post a copy of these slides and the recording on the NFWF website at http://www.nfwf.org/lowermsvalley.**

Webinar Agenda

- **Program Overview**
  - **2024 Funding Opportunity**
  - **Geography**
  - **Lower MS Alluvial Valley business plan**
- **Program Priorities**
- **How to Apply in Easygrants**
  - **Resource Links**
- **Timeline and Contact Information**

Bottomland hardwood planting | Credit: Bruce Reid

Program Overview

The **Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund** invests in on-the-ground projects to restore, enhance and conserve bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands and promote aquatic connectivity on private and public lands to improve wildlife habitat and water quality.

Public-Private Partnership

International Paper

The Walton Family Foundation

USDA

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Big Island | Credit: John Ruskey

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

NFWF

2024 Funding Opportunity

- **Request for Proposals:** www.nfwf.org/lowermsvalley
- **Proposal due date:** April 25, 2024, by 11:59PM ET
- **Anticipated Funding:** $4.2 million
- **Grant size:** $150,000 - $750,000**
- **Eligible Applicants*:**
  - ✓ Non-profit 501(c)
  - ✓ State, tribal and local governments
  - ✓ Academic institutions

Mississippi River side channel | Credit: Bruce Reid

Federal agencies, for-profits and individual landowners cannot directly apply, but may be partners on projects

***Applicants considering proposals outside of this funding range are encouraged to contact NFWF prior to submitting.*

Geography

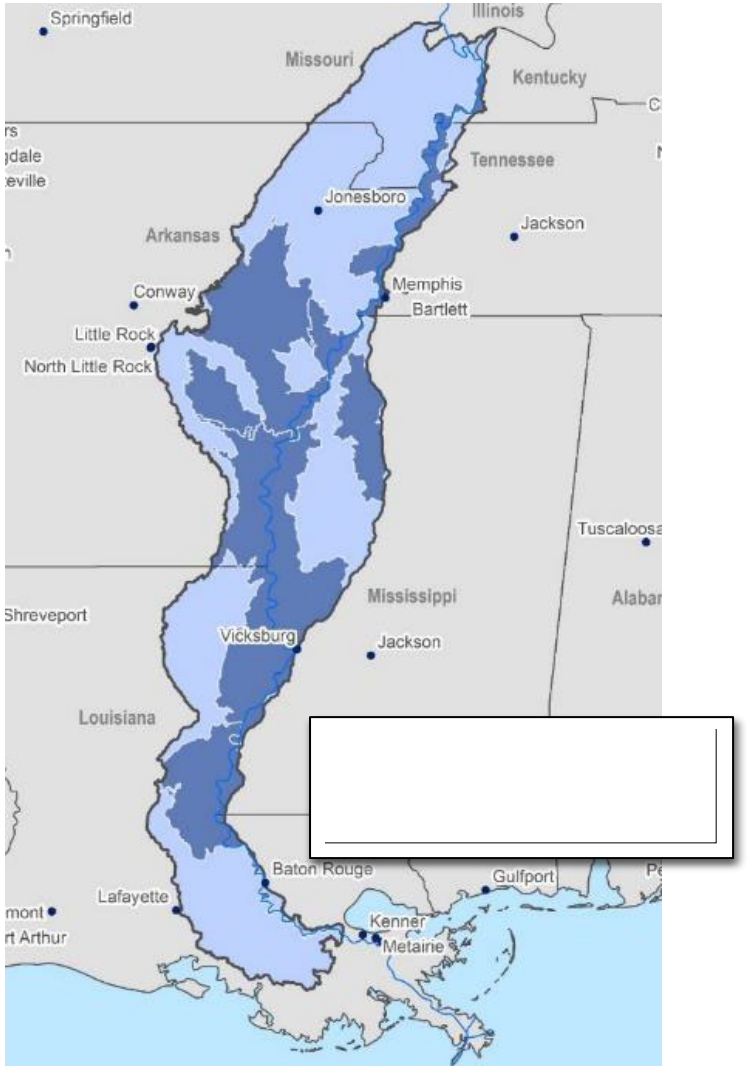
Projects must occur within the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley in the following states…

Arkansas	Illinois	Kentucky	Louisiana
Mississippi	Missouri	Tennessee	

***Preference given to projects within focal geographies**

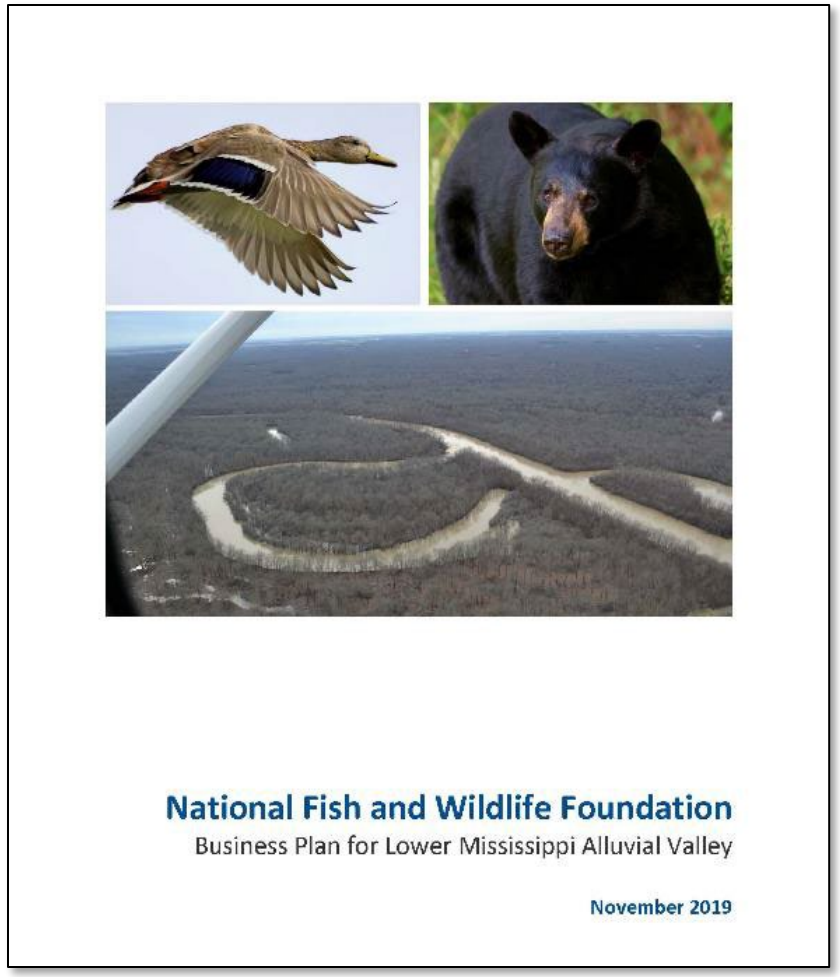
Lands eligible for funding include:

- Privately-owned lands
- State and local government lands
- Federal lands (encouraged to be part of projects where state, local and/or private lands are also included)



Lower MS Alluvial Valley Program Landscape

Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Business Plan



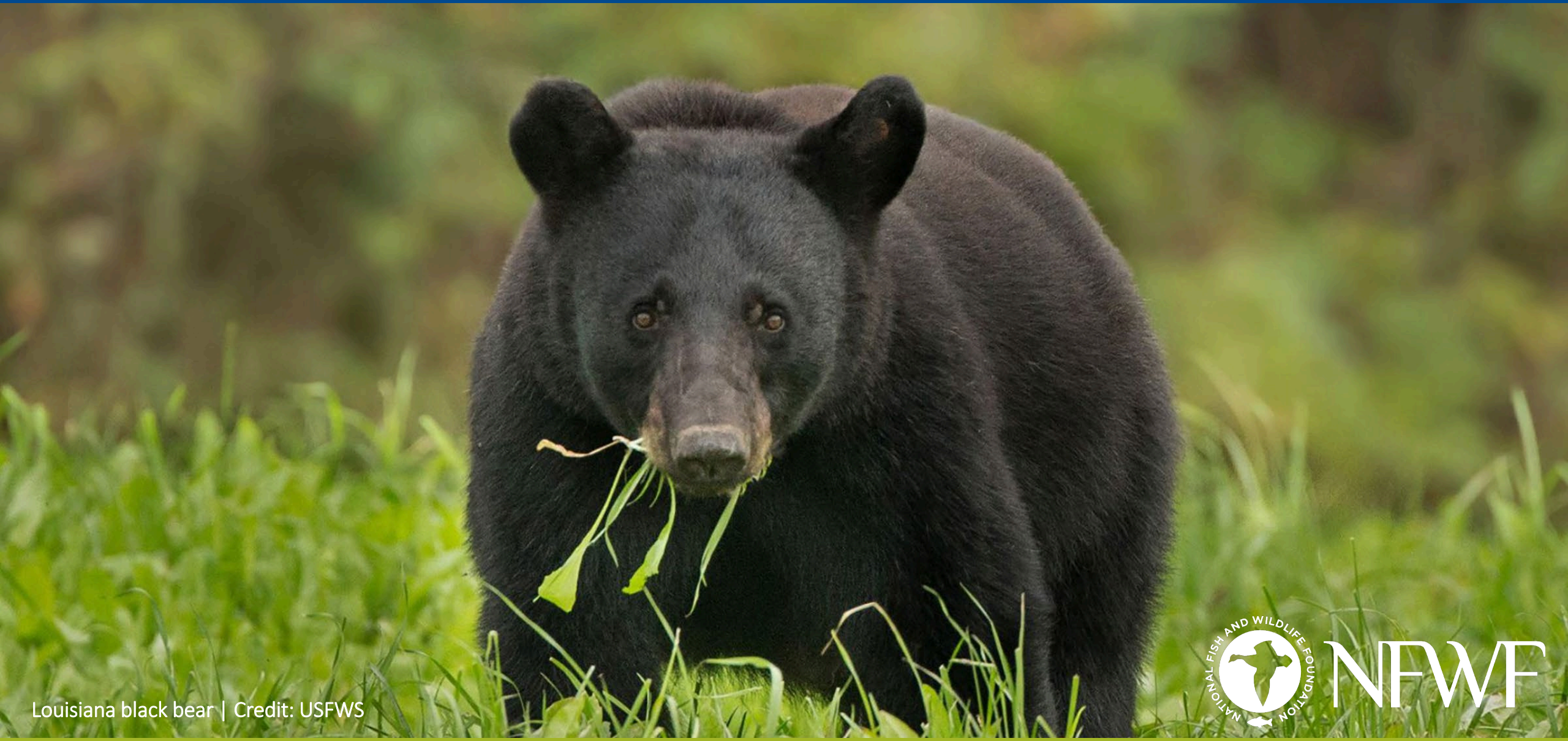
https://www.nfwf.org/lowermsvalley/Documents/lmav-business-plan.pdf

Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Business Plan

10-Year Habitat Goals

Goal	Target
Enhance and Maintain Existing Bottomland Hardwood Forests	25,000 acres
Restore (Establish) New Bottomland Hardwood Forests	25,000 acres
Restore and enhance hydrologic function to wetland and floodplain habitats	15,000 acres
Protect Bottomland Hardwood Forests and Wetlands with Conservation Easements	30,000 acres
Improve Connectivity of Stream and River Habitats	35 miles
Improve connectivity and hydrologic function to oxbows, scar lakes and other surface water features	500 acres
Install agricultural best management practices to improve water quality	10,000 acres
Engage private landowners through outreach and technical assistance	5,000 landowners
Move landowners to conservation action	500 landowners

Program Priorities



Louisiana black bear | Credit: USFWS

Program Priorities

1. Bottomland Hardwood Forest Enhancement and Maintenance
2. Bottomland Hardwood Restoration
3. Restoration of Wetland and Floodplain Hydrology
4. Implement Conservation Practices on Working Agricultural Lands
5. Targeted Outreach, Education, and Technical Assistance
6. Bottomland Forest Habitat Conservation (Easements)
7. Improve Aquatic Connectivity
8. Restoration Response Monitoring

NFWF is interested in projects that also:

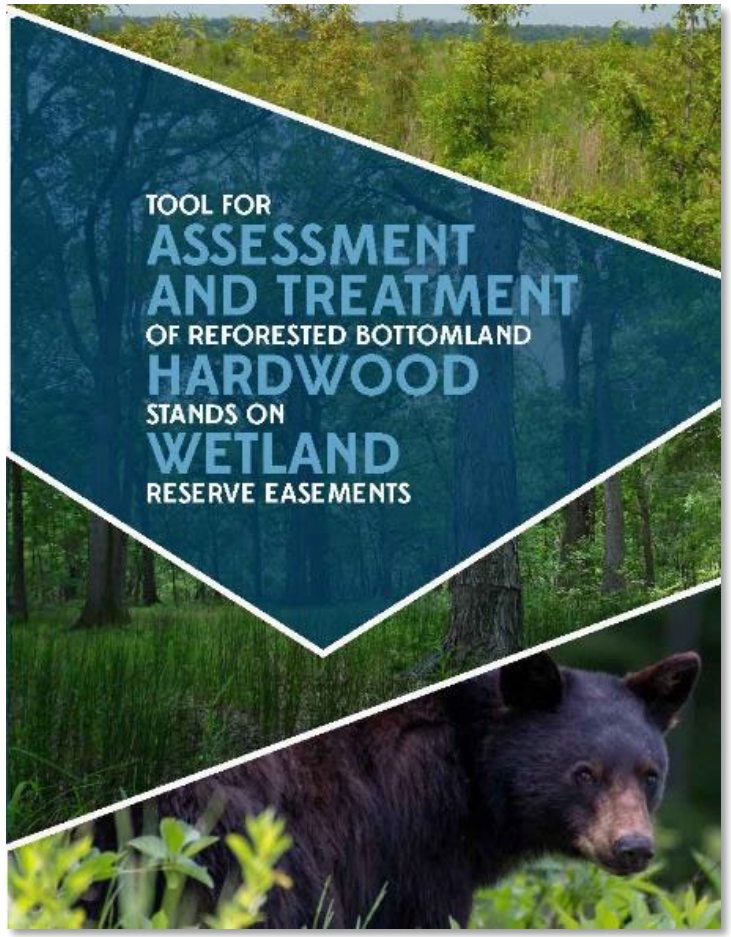
- sequester carbon and/ or improve water quantity or quality
- include outreach and technical assistance to minority and underserved landowners and producers

NFWF

Bottomland Hardwood Forest Enhancement and Maintenance

Practices or forest treatments that improve wildlife habitat quality and health of existing bottomland hardwood forests, including:

- Thinning
- Crop tree release
- Invasive species control
- Residual stocking



Note: Projects that include work on lands enrolled in USDA Farm Bill programs should coordinate with the appropriate NRCS state office

Bottomland Hardwood Forest Restoration

- Reforestation and/or afforestation of cropland
- Preference to projects that contribute to landscape-scale habitat connectivity to benefit wildlife
- Site preparation and planting of bottomland hardwoods
- Practices to promote natural regeneration of bottomland hardwood forest
- Addressing barriers to reforestation/afforestation
- Incentives to encourage tree planting (ex. leveraging grant funds with USDA Conservation Reserve Program, Wetland Reserve Enhancement Partnership, etc.)

Projects should:

✓ Summarize plans to promote long-term management for wildlife habitat

Photo credit: Wildlife MS

Restoration of Wetland and Floodplain Hydrology

- Connecting wetlands and water features between adjacent properties
- Vegetation management to improve wetland habitat and function
- Managing for moist soil plants
- Installation of low-maintenance water control structures, such as flashboard risers, for water management capability.

Implement Conservation Practices on Working Agricultural Lands

- Rerouting agricultural runoff to constructed or restored wetlands
- Rehabilitating or stabilizing ditches and/or gullies
- Integrating practices to conserve soil, reduce erosion, and protect water quality, such as:
  - cover crops
  - no-till
  - conservation crop rotation, and/or
  - establishing buffer strips

Photo credit: Tim McCabe, USDA NRCS

Targeted Outreach, Education and Technical Assistance

- Education and training opportunities for landowners and/or conservation practitioners
  - Outreach and technical assistance capacity, i.e. “boots on the ground”
  - Efforts to minimize human-bear conflict
- Address landowner barriers to participation in forestry and conservation programs
- Demonstration sites
- Advance new market-based solutions or incentives
- Increase participation in third-party forest certification

USDA NRCS Priorities

- Bolstering enrollment into the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).
- Promoting, designing, and implementing **climate-smart agriculture and forestry conservation practices** and reducing the Farm Bill practice contracting and implementation backlog.
- Increase conservation program participation and practice adoption among USDA defined **Historically Underserved** and **Special Emphasis** farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners are strongly encouraged.

Note: A portion of available NRCS funding is designated for work in **Missouri** and **Mississippi**, please reach out to NFWF staff if considering a project in this category in Missouri and/or Mississippi.

NRCS Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities:
https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/climate/climate-smart-mitigation-activities

Bottomland Hardwood Forest Habitat Conservation

- Capacity and due diligence costs (boundary surveys, appraisals, legal fees, etc.) to facilitate targeted conservation easement projects
- Funding for acquisition costs is limited
- Land conservation should be included as part of larger bottomland forest/wetland restoration proposal

Improve Aquatic Connectivity

- Restore or retrofit barriers, such as dikes, levees, culverts and other water conveyance and control structures, to improve flows and increase habitat connectivity.
- Preference for projects that will increase the frequency and duration of floodplain and/or oxbow connection to the Mississippi River main stem to improve rearing habitat for gar species.
- Proposals should detail the pre- and post-intervention freshwater fish monitoring at the site to be conducted either by the applicant or a partner/subcontractor.
  - Monitoring should include a sampling design and detection/capture methods for, abundance, and, if applicable, life-stages for the species being targeted.
  - Both single- and multi-species approaches will be considered.

Dike notching | Credit: Bruce Reid

Restoration Response Monitoring

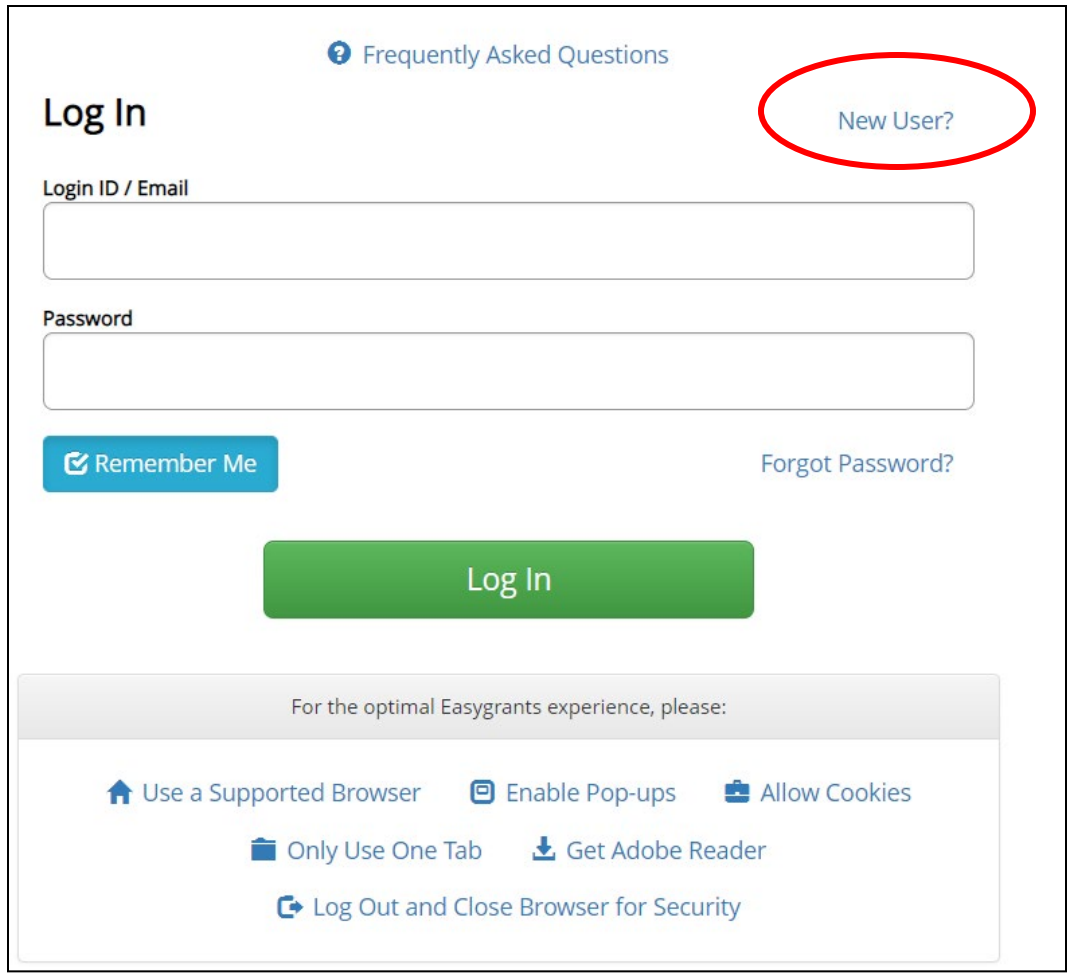
- Develop and implement monitoring protocols to measure Louisiana black bear, waterfowl, forest birds, swamp rabbit, and/or gar (fish) response to habitat restoration and enhancement projects funded through the grant program.
- Establish a baseline measurement if baseline data is not available.
- Contact NFWF staff if submitting a proposal that includes species monitoring:
  - Zack Bernstein (Zachary.Bernstein@nfwf.org)
  - Jon Scott (Jonathan.Scott@nfwf.org)

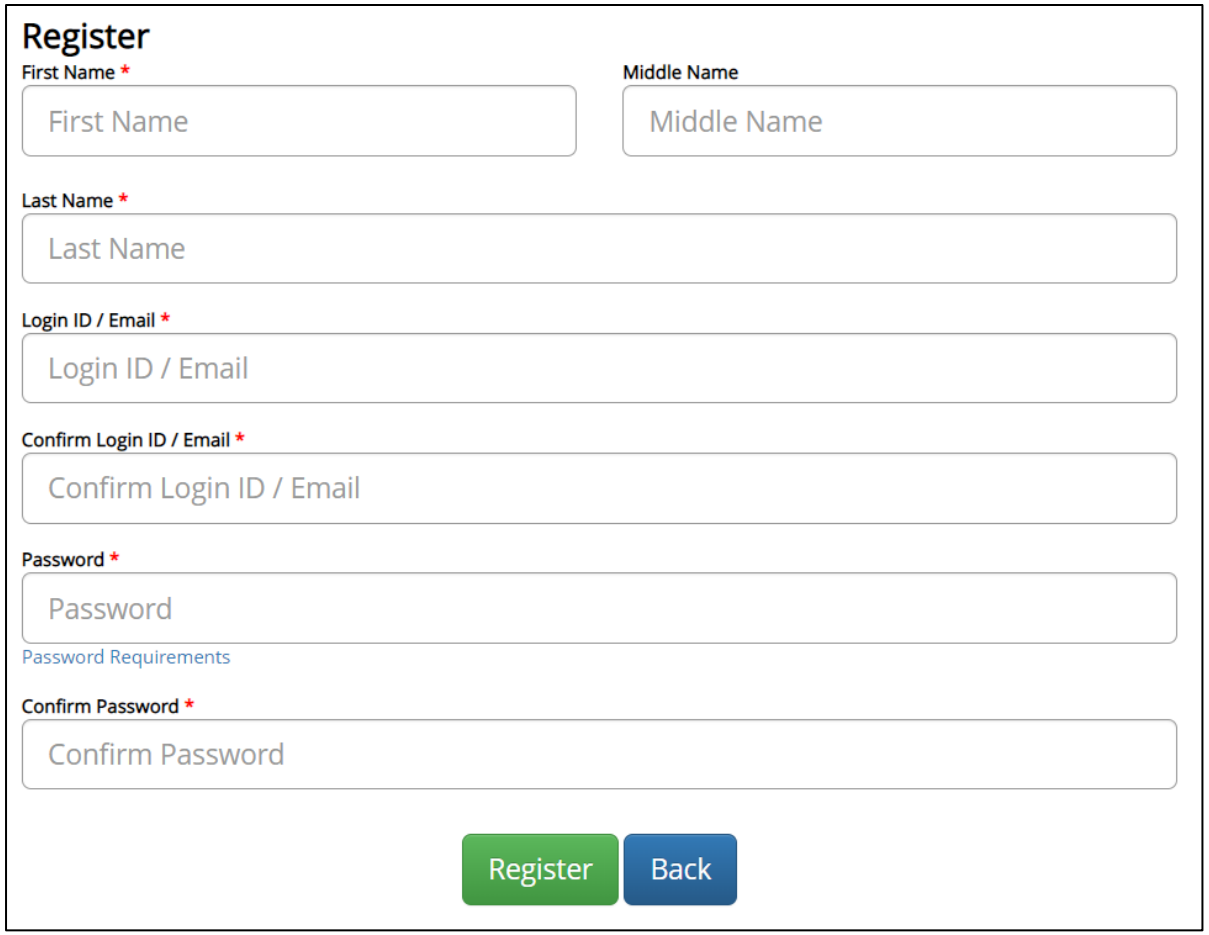
Pallid sturgeon| Credit: Bruce Reid

How to Apply in Easygrants

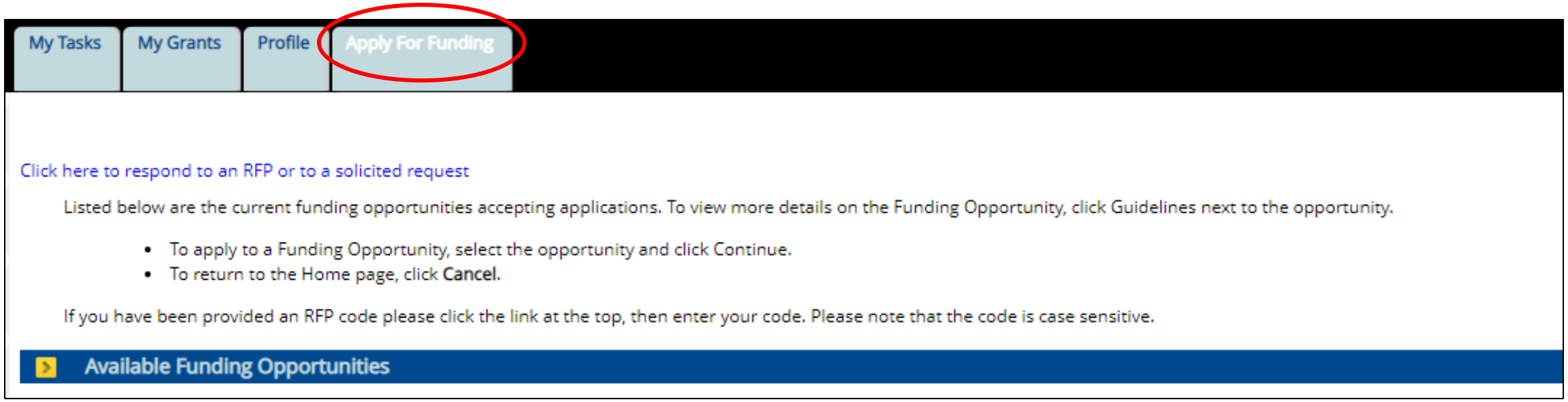
Prothonotary warbler | Credit: iStock

How to Apply in Easygrants





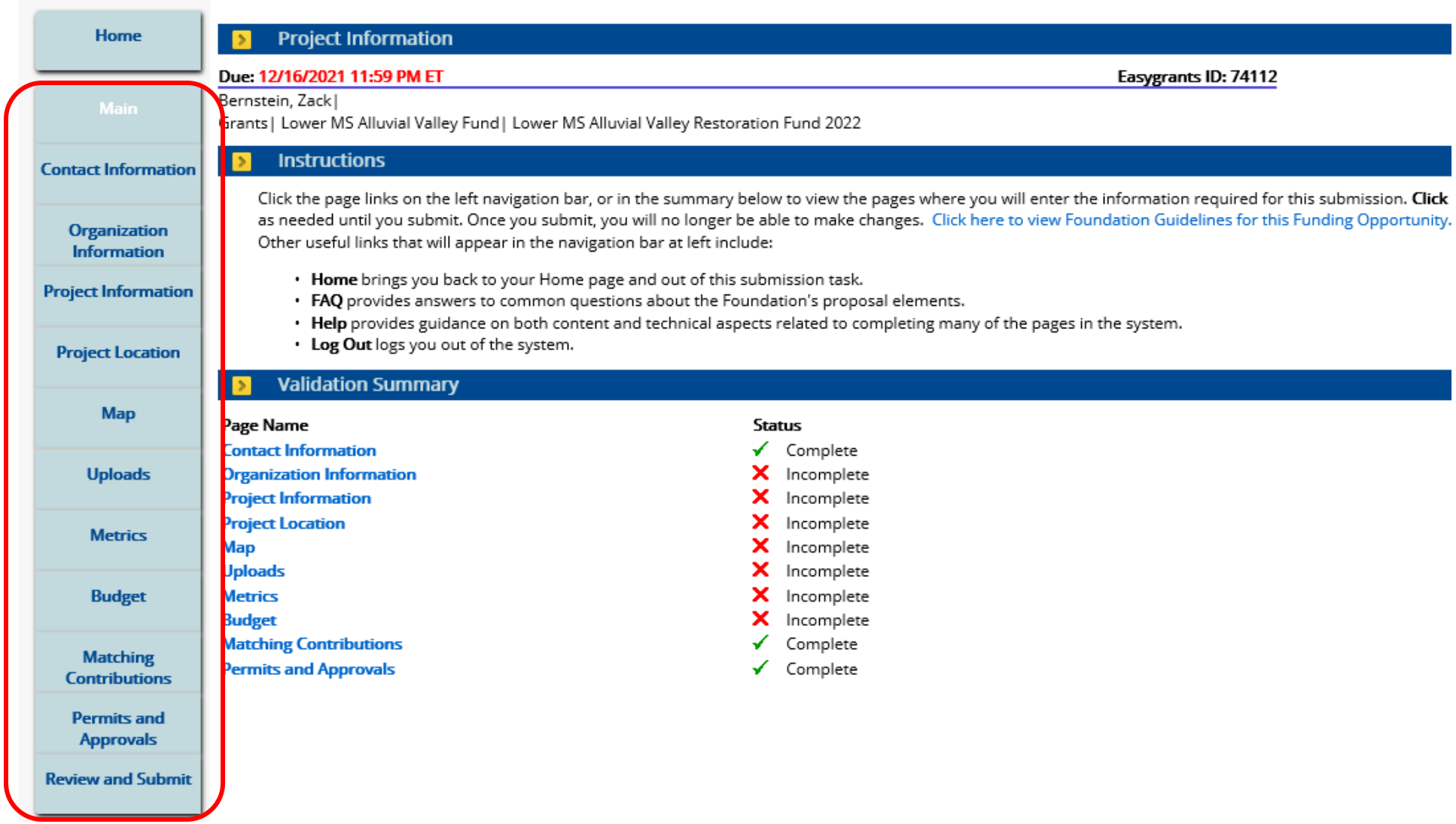
How to Apply in Easygrants



Once you are on your Easygrants homepage, click on “Apply for Funding”

Choose the Funding Opportunity you’re applying to.

How to Apply in Easygrants



Project Information

Title: Short, descriptive name indicating project purpose. (~100 characters)

Project start and end dates: Start within six months of the award announcement date and end within 24-48 months of the start date.

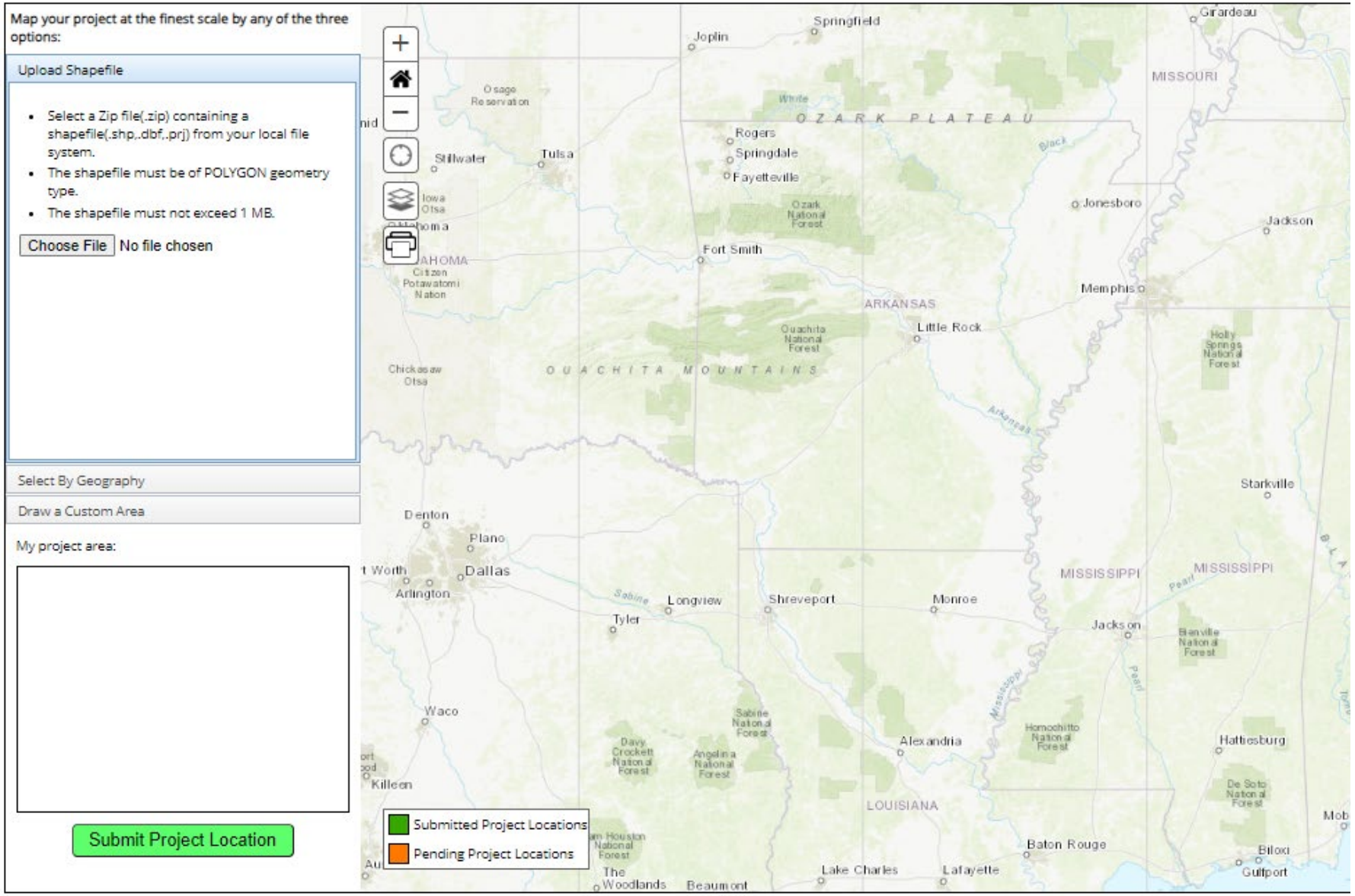
Description: Two sentences about primary project activities, location, outcome/metrics and relevance to conservation. (~500 characters)

- Clearly state the main activity and the method being used
- Address a specific habitat, location or species benefitted

Abstract: More detailed description including location, major activities, outcome/metrics, and partners. (~1,500 characters)

- State what your organization will do
- Provide context and background information
- Explain how the project outcomes will specifically address a conservation issue

Map



I confirm that this project has been mapped as accurately as possible

Save and Continue

Uploads

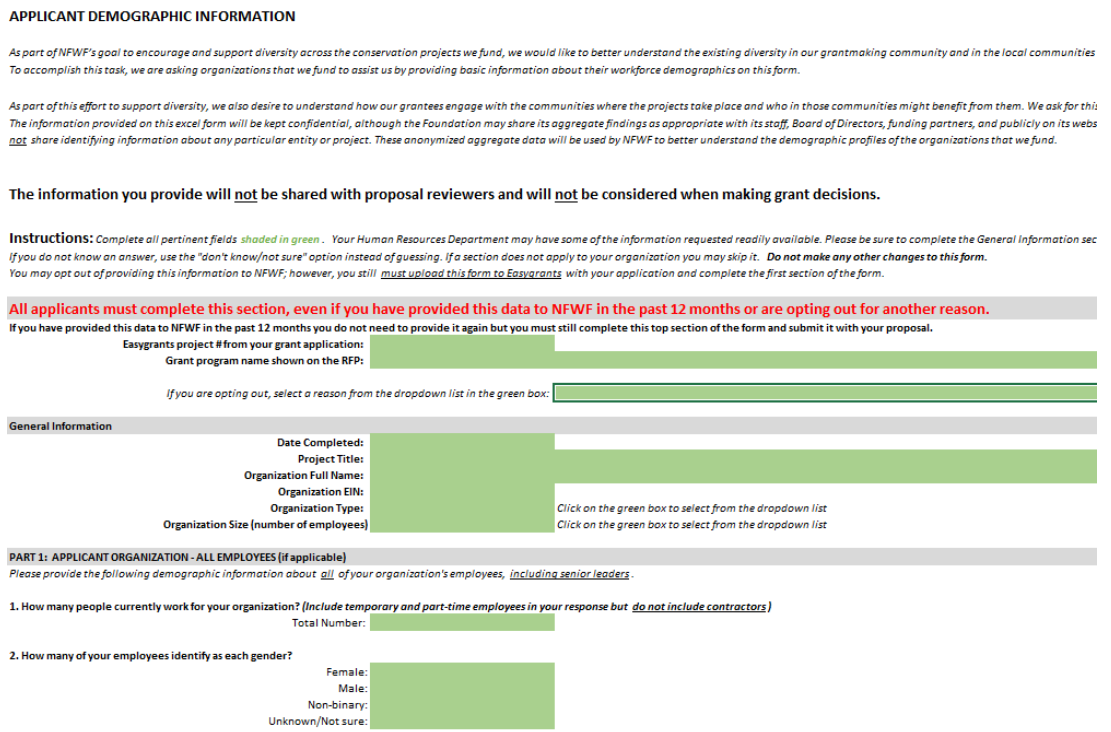
Upload Checklist

Upload Type	Required	Template
LMAV Full Proposal Narrative Template 2024	Yes	LMAV Full Proposal Narrative Template 2024
Project Map	Yes	
Letters of Support	Yes	
Conceptual Plans	No	
Engineered Plans	No	
Photos - Jpeg	No	
LMAV Applicant Demographic Information Form 2024	Yes	LMAV Applicant Demographic Information Form 2023
Statement of Litigation	Yes	Statement of Litigation
Board of Trustees, Directors, or equivalent	Yes	
Applicant Controls Questionnaire	Yes	Applicant Controls Questionnaire (Rev 7.31.23)
Applicant Demographic Information Form	Yes	Applicant Demographic Information Form
GAAP audited financial statements	Yes	
IRS Form 990	Yes	
Single Audit (Formerly A-133 Audit)	Yes	
Indirect Rate Agreement	No	
Other Documents	No	

The full list of required uploads for your organization type is available on the NFWF website here: https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/required-financial-documents

Uploads - Applicant Demographic Information Form

- **The information you provide will not be shared with proposal reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions.**
- The Foundation will not 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 understand the existing diversity in our grantmaking community and in the local communities To accomplish this task, we are asking organizations that we fund to assist us by providing basic information about their workforce demographics on this form.

As part of this effort to support diversity, we also desire to understand how our grantees engage with the communities where the projects take place and who in those communities might benefit from them. We ask for thi The information provided on this excel form will be kept confidential, although the Foundation may share its aggregate findings as appropriate with its staff, Board of Directors, funding partners, and publicly on its webs not share identifying information about any particular entity or project. These anonymized aggregate data will be used by NFWF to better understand the demographic profiles of the organizations that we fund.

The information you provide will not be shared with proposal reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions.

Instructions: *Complete all pertinent fields shaded in green . Your Human Resources Department may have some of the information requested readily available. Please be sure to complete the General Information sec If 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 organization you may skip it.* ***Do not make any other changes to this form.***
You may opt out of providing this information to NFWF; however, you still must upload this form to Easygrants with your application and complete the first section of the form.

All applicants must complete this section, even if you have provided this data to NFWF in the past 12 months or are opting out for another reason.

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 this top section of the form and submit it with your proposal.

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 green box to select from the dropdown list*
Organization Size (number of employees) *Click on the green box to select from the dropdown list*

PART 1: APPLICANT ORGANIZATION - ALL EMPLOYEES (if applicable)

Please provide the following demographic information about all of your organization's employees, including senior leaders .

1. How many people currently work for your organization? *(Include temporary and part-time employees in your response but do not include contractors)*
Total Number:

2. How many of your employees identify as each gender?
Female:
Male:
Non-binary:
Unknown/Not sure:

Narrative

- **Project Overview:** 1-2 paragraph high level project summary.
- **Conservation Need:** Describe the threats and/or conservation needs that this project seeks to address.
- **Project Activities:** Elaborate on the primary activities that will be employed through the grant.
- **Tracking Metrics:** Indicate how the project will monitor/assess progress toward the outcome metrics selected in Easygrants.
- **Conservation Outcome(s):** Describe the conservation outcomes that will be achieved through project implementation with reference to the selected outcome metrics; discuss what makes the outcomes achievable and important.
- **Benefit to Species and Conservation Co-Benefits:** Please describe how the activities described in the proposal will contribute to improved populations of species that are representative of healthy forest and/or wetland systems. If applicable, please also describe any anticipated carbon sequestration and/or water quality or quantity benefits that may be achieved through the project.
- **Project Team:** List key individuals that will be directly involved in project implementation and describe their qualifications.
- **Community Impact:** Describe the community(ies) where the project will take place, who will benefit from the project, and how they were or will be engaged in project development and implementation.
- **Other (Optional):** Provide any further information important for the review of this proposal

Narrative - Community Impact

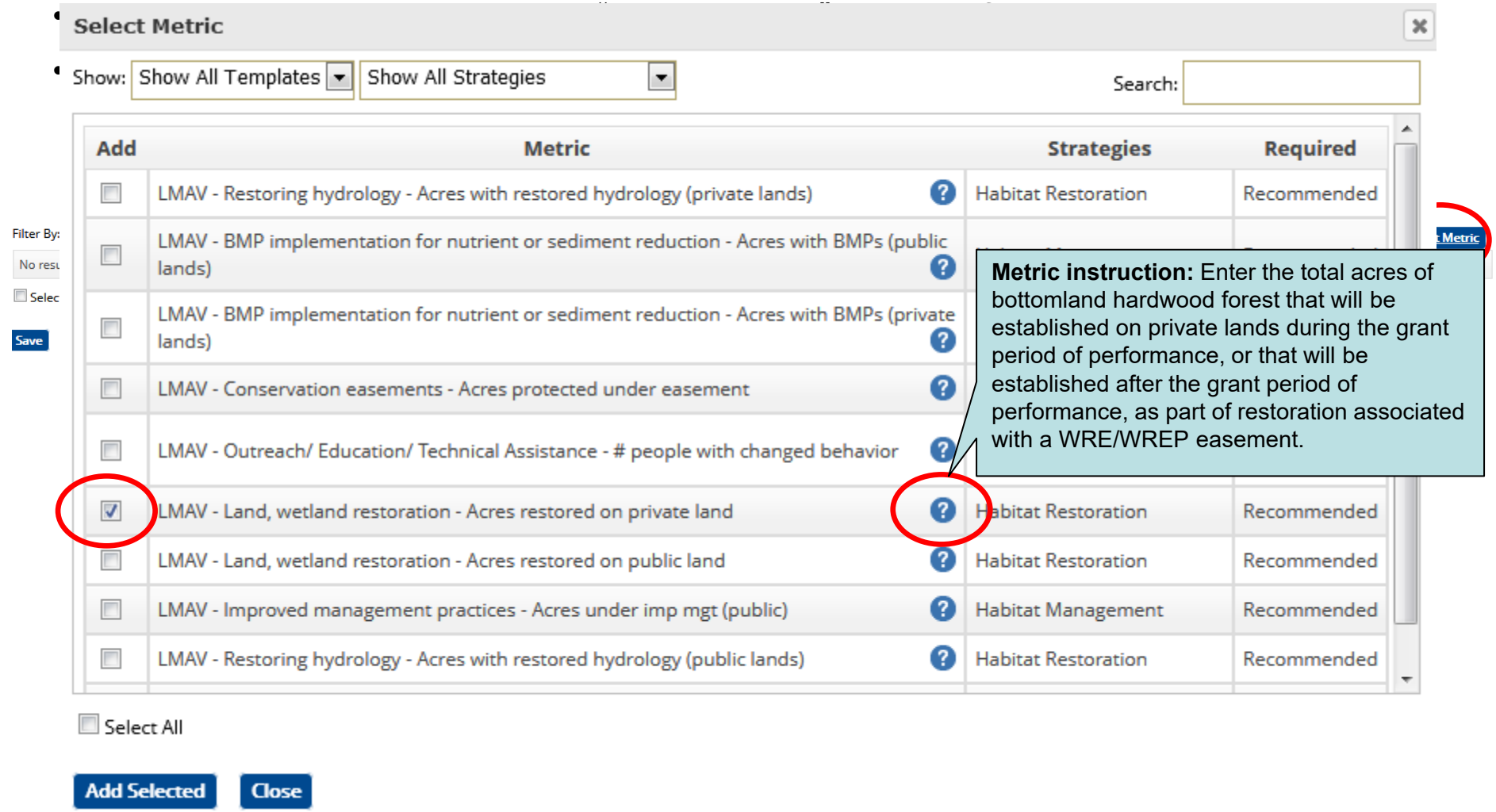
Describe the community(ies) where the project will take place, who will benefit from the project, and how they were or will be engaged in project development and implementation. Provide demographic information on the community(ies), including but not limited to age, race and ethnicity, poverty rates.

- Describe community characteristics of the project area and identify any communities impacted.

- Describe outreach and community engagement activities.

- Use demographic data to document (poverty statistics, school lunch data, demographic records to articulate high need or underserved communities).
  - This data can be found using:
    - **Census data**
    - **School District data**
    - **State data centers**
    - **EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN)**
    - **other sources**
  - Reach out to us if you need help finding this data

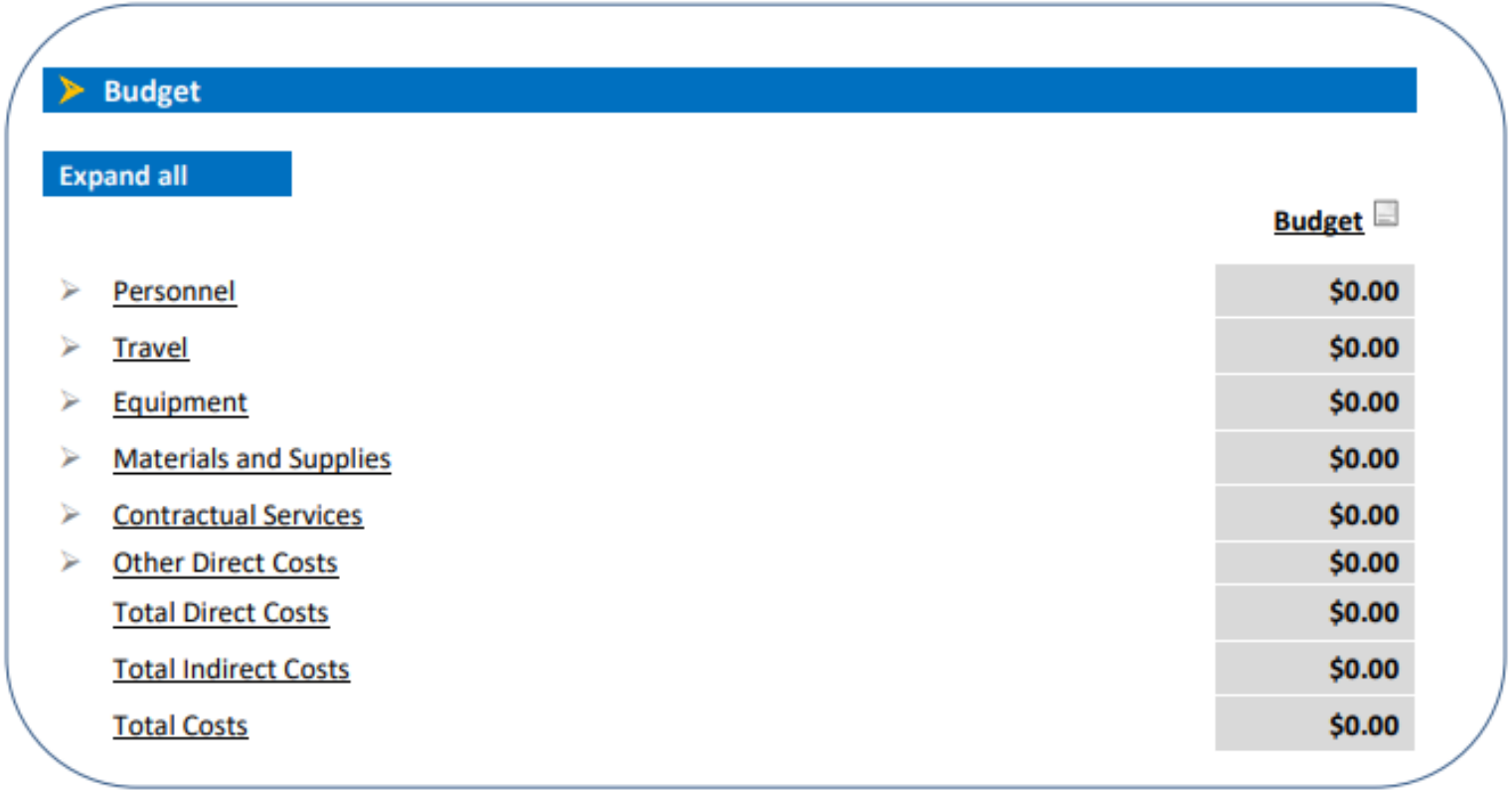
Metrics



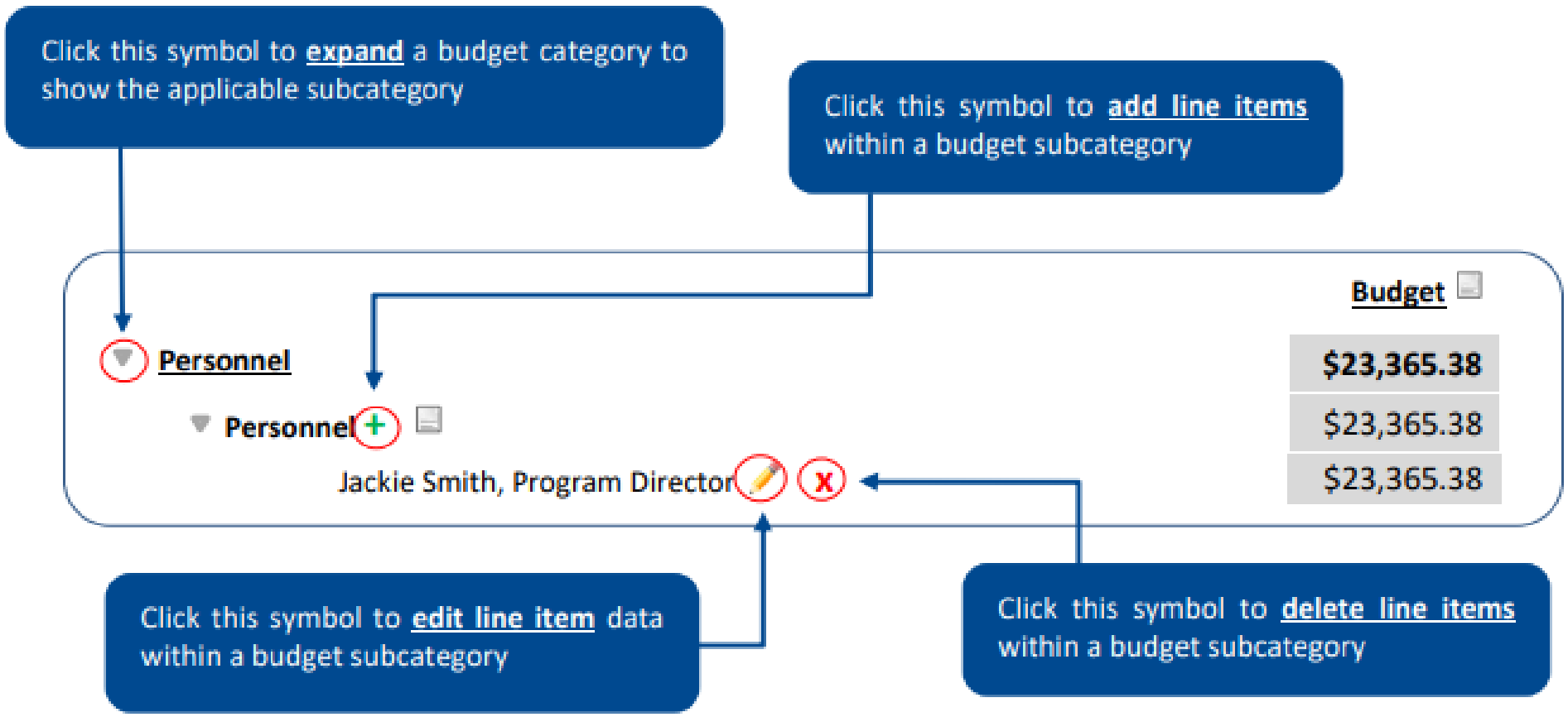
*** If none of the available metrics apply to your project, please contact NFWF to discuss**

Budget

- In order to complete a budget for your proposal, you must expand the appropriate categories and provide the information requested.
- If you do not anticipate an expense for a particular category, skip that category- it is not necessary to enter a “0” value in the cost fields.
- Try to anticipate factors that may affect the budget when developing projections and provide an explanation of those factors.
- Matching contributions should not be included in the budget.



Budget


Click this symbol to expand a budget category to show the applicable subcategory
Click this symbol to add line items within a budget subcategory
Budget
Personnel
$23,365.38
Personnel
$23,365.38
Jackie Smith, Program Director
$23,365.38
Click this symbol to edit line item data within a budget subcategory
Click this symbol to delete line items within a budget subcategory

Detailed Budget Instructions: Adding/Editing Narratives

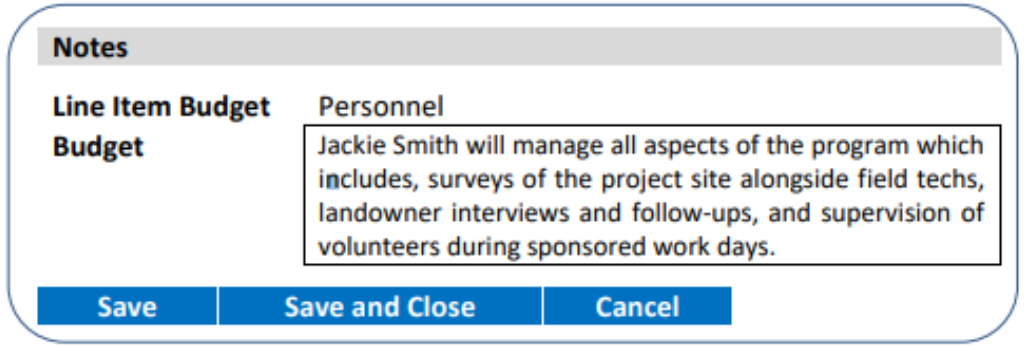
- Narratives are required for all budgeted categories.
  - Explain/justify the estimated costs including the unit cost and quantity requested
  - Explain how the costs associated with each line item supports the implementation of the project as outlined in the proposal

- Narratives should be written in such a way that someone not familiar with the project can conceptually understand the **rationale**, **purpose** and **calculation** of the anticipated costs identified by line item.

- Narratives should be concise and describe line items in 1-3 sentences.

Figures without narrative descriptions will be returned to the applicant for further details and clarification.

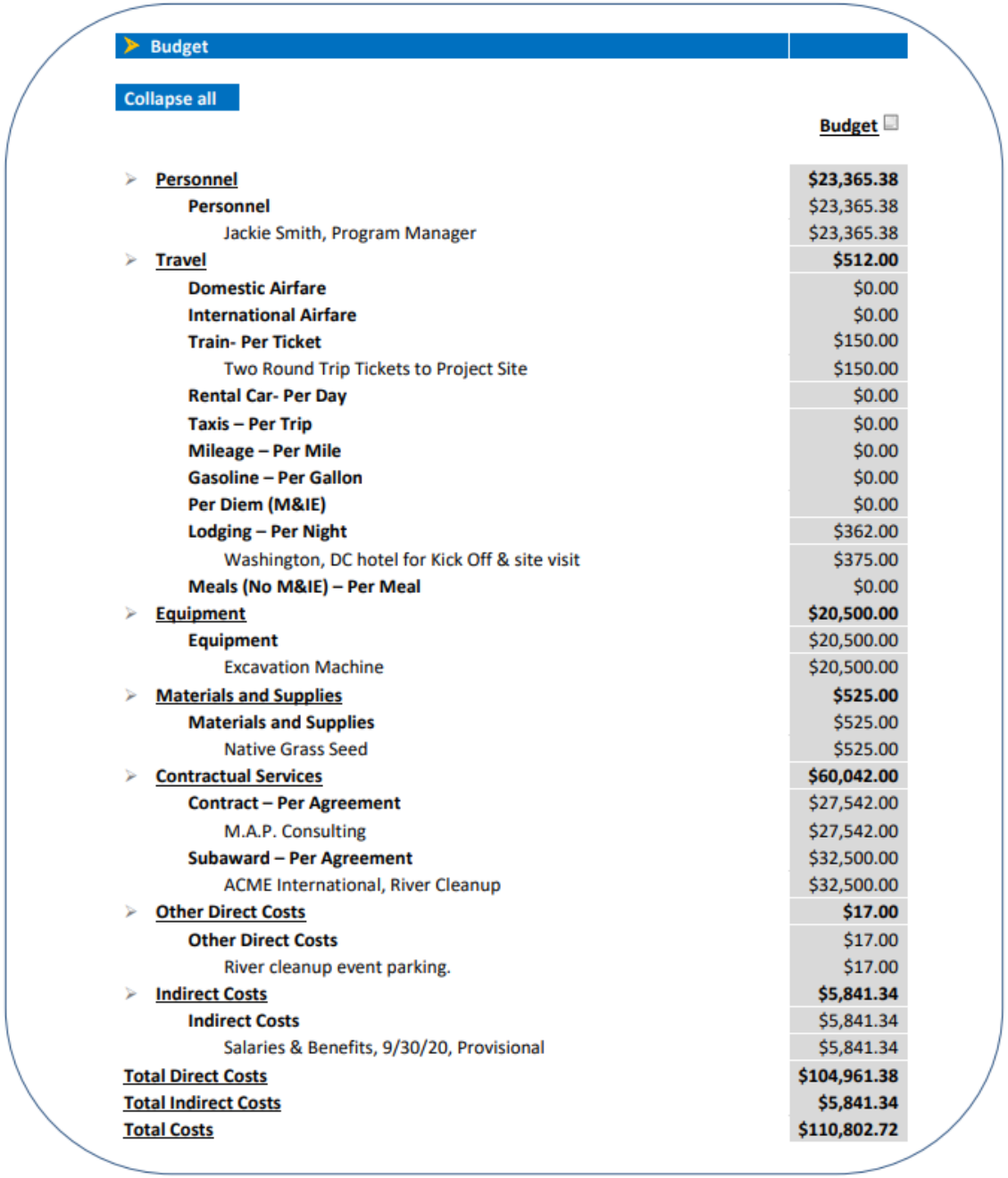
Next, complete the narrative box as shown below:



Detailed Budget Instructions

- The final expanded budget will appear as follows, showing the budget details.

- For further questions, contact Program Staff listed on the RFP.

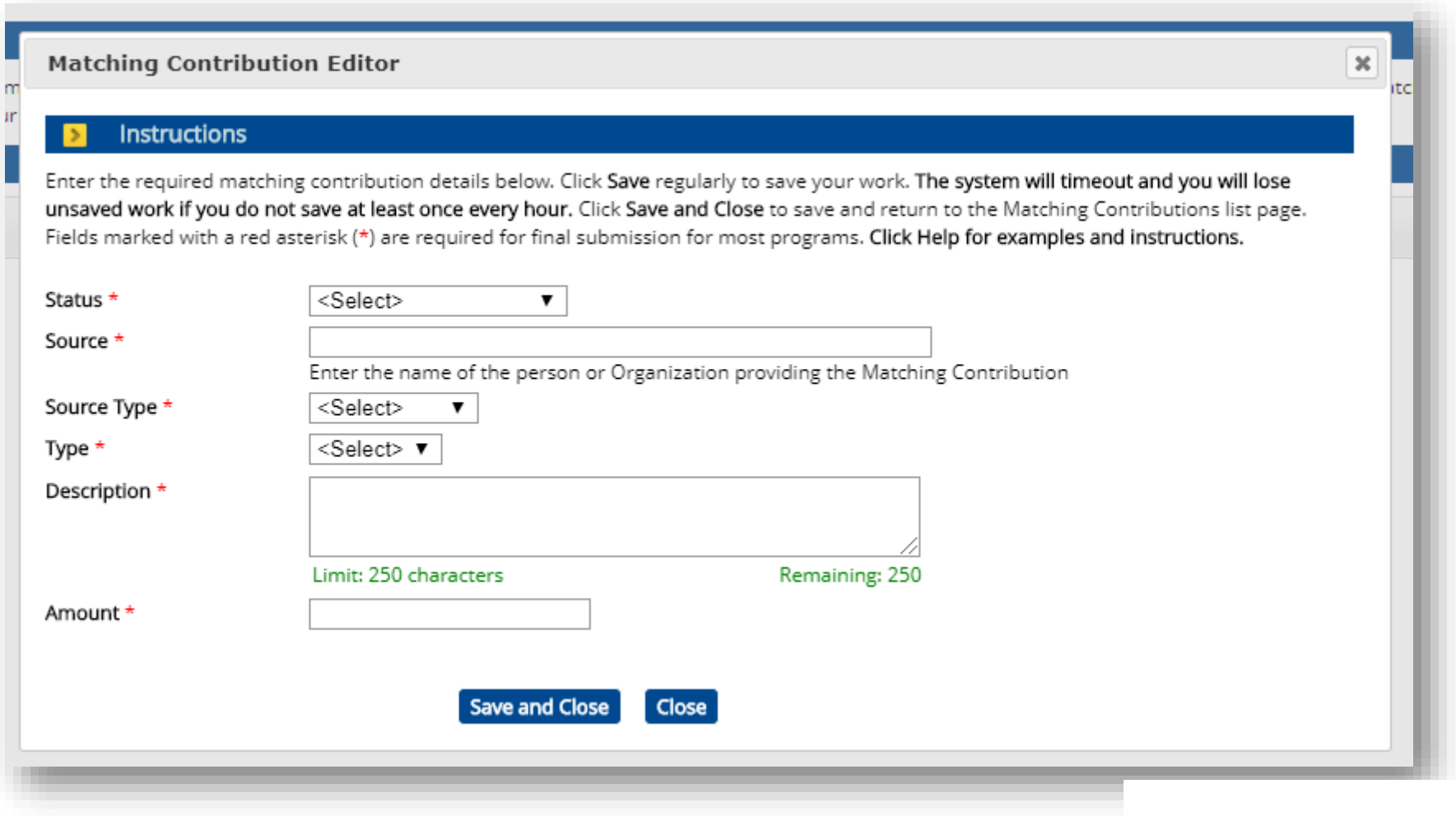


Budget

Collapse all

	Budget
Personnel	**$23,365.38**
Personnel	$23,365.38
Jackie Smith, Program Manager	$23,365.38
Travel	**$512.00**
Domestic Airfare	$0.00
International Airfare	$0.00
Train- Per Ticket	$150.00
Two Round Trip Tickets to Project Site	$150.00
Rental Car- Per Day	$0.00
Taxis – Per Trip	$0.00
Mileage – Per Mile	$0.00
Gasoline – Per Gallon	$0.00
Per Diem (M&IE)	$0.00
Lodging – Per Night	$362.00
Washington, DC hotel for Kick Off & site visit	$375.00
Meals (No M&IE) – Per Meal	$0.00
Equipment	**$20,500.00**
Equipment	$20,500.00
Excavation Machine	$20,500.00
Materials and Supplies	**$525.00**
Materials and Supplies	$525.00
Native Grass Seed	$525.00
Contractual Services	**$60,042.00**
Contract – Per Agreement	$27,542.00
M.A.P. Consulting	$27,542.00
Subaward – Per Agreement	$32,500.00
ACME International, River Cleanup	$32,500.00
Other Direct Costs	**$17.00**
Other Direct Costs	$17.00
River cleanup event parking.	$17.00
Indirect Costs	**$5,841.34**
Indirect Costs	$5,841.34
Salaries & Benefits, 9/30/20, Provisional	$5,841.34
Total Direct Costs	**$104,961.38**
Total Indirect Costs	**$5,841.34**
Total Costs	**$110,802.72**

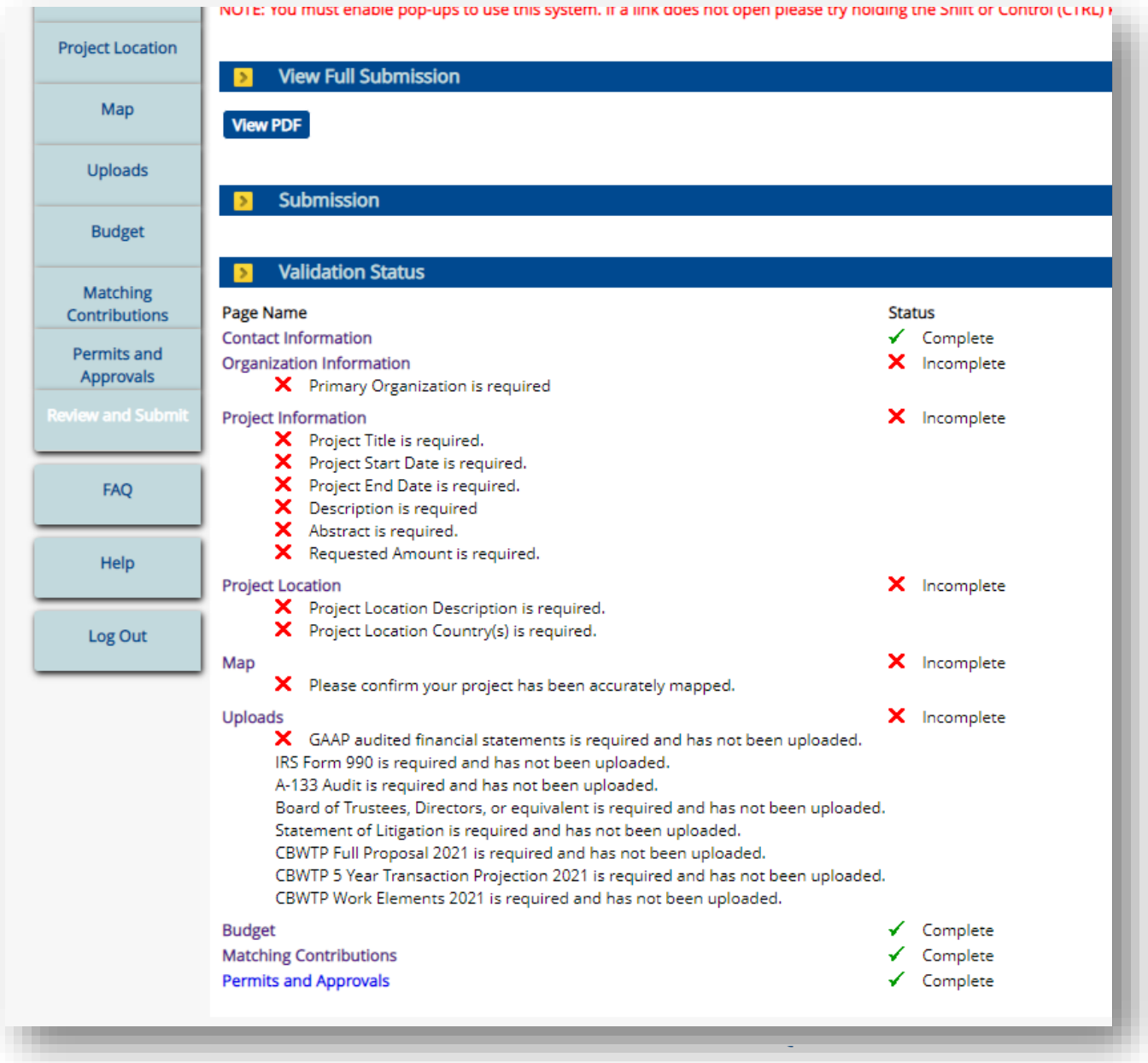
Matching Contributions



Review and Submit

- Make sure to click the blue **“Submit”** button to submit your proposal.

- If correctly submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail and the task will disappear from your homepage.



Resources

Tip Sheet

https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/2024_lower_ms_tip_sheet.pdf

Required Financial Documents

http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/required-financial-docs.aspx

Budget Instructions

http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/budget-instructions.aspx

Detailed Budget and Narrative Guide

https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/nfwf-detailed-budget-narrative-guide.pdf

NFWF Indirect Policy

http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/indirect-policy.aspx

Mapping Tutorial

http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/mapping-tool.aspx

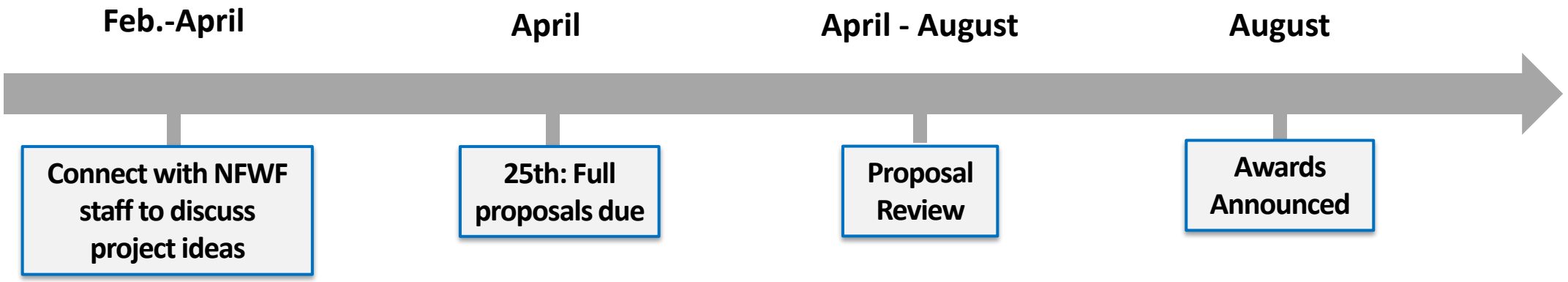
Lower MS Alluvial Valley business plan

https://www.nfwf.org/lowermsvalley/Documents/lmav-business-plan.pdf

Timeline and Contact Information

Prothonotary warbler | Credit: iStock

Program Timeline



QUESTIONS or COMMENTS

Zack Bernstein
Program Manager, Southern Forests
zachary.bernstein@nfwf.org
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