Chi–Cal Rivers Fund

2025 Webinar for Applicants

WEBINAR AGENDA

- **Welcome & Introductions**

- **Chi–Cal Rivers Fund Overview**

- **2025 Funding Opportunity**

  - **Funding Priorities**

  - **Maximizing the Project Narrative**

  - **Applying for a grant – Additional pre-recorded Easygrants webinar available**

- BNSF Railway
- Cleveland-Cliffs
- Crown Family Philanthropies
- Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
- Hunter Family Foundation
- The Joyce Foundation
- Walder Foundation
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
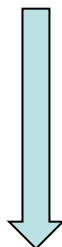
PUBLIC–PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

ACCOMPLISHMENTS
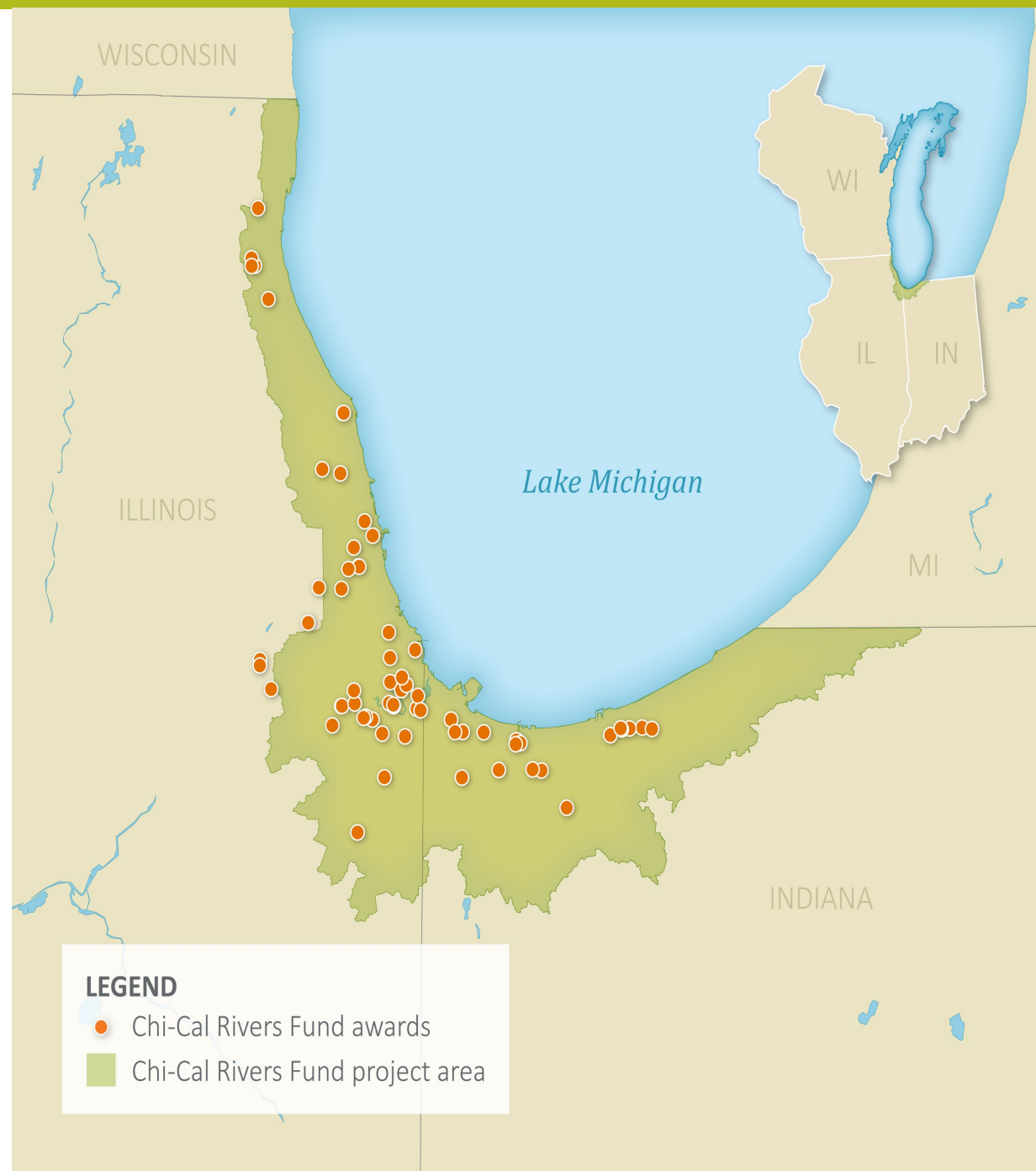# 2013–2024

72 grants: $16.4 million

Grantee match: $30 million

Total investment: $46.4 million

- 24.4 M gal stormwater storage

- 5,812 acres habitat restoration

- 180 acres public natural space added or improved

LEGEND
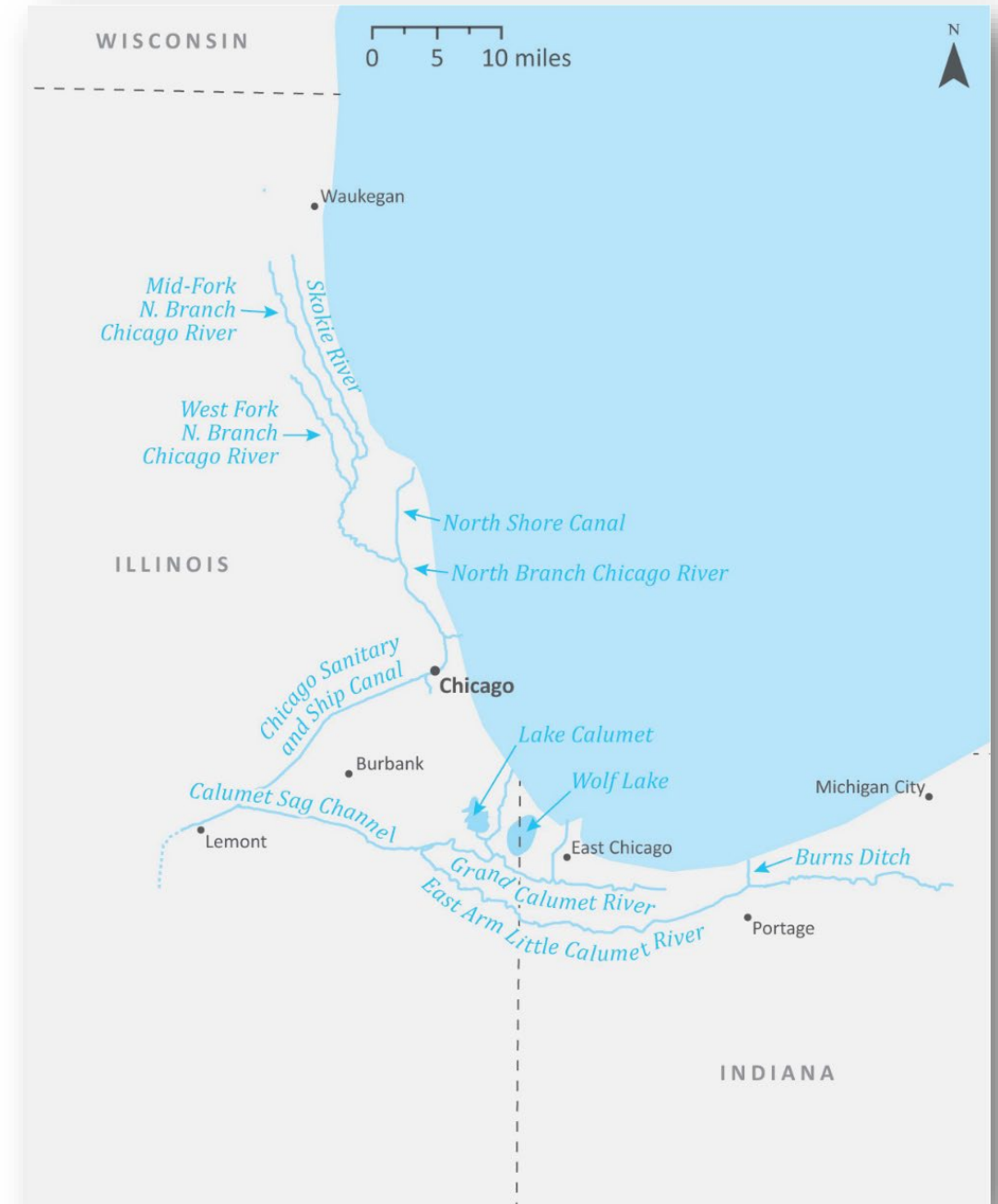- Chi-Cal Rivers Fund awards
- Chi-Cal Rivers Fund project area

2025 CHI-CAL RIVERS FUND FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

- Grants range from $150k to $400k

- Full Proposals due July 30, 2025

To be eligible for funding, projects must:

- Occur near the major waterways of the system and their tributaries

- Demonstrate direct benefits to the major waterways of the system

APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- Eligible applicants

  - ✓ Non-profit organizations
  - ✓ State, tribal, and local governments
  - ✓ Educational institutions

- Ineligible applicants

  - ✓ Individuals
  - ✓ Federal agencies
  - ✓ Private for-profit firms

– *A single organization may submit multiple applications*

– *Unlikely for an organization to receive more than one award per cycle*

– *Grantees with active Chi-Cal Rivers Fund awards are eligible to apply for additional funding*

FUNDING CATEGORIES

1. Habitat Quality

2. Nature-Based Infrastructure

3. Activate Restored Habitats and Natural Areas

❖ Identify one category that best describes the project. You may also identify any relevant secondary categories

❖ Summaries of previously funded projects can be viewed at: https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chi-cal-rivers-fund

HABITAT QUALITY - PRIMARY STRATEGIES

Support riparian, in-stream, upland and wetland habitat improvements along or near the major waterways of the system to achieve a range of ecological benefits, such as improving water quality, reducing erosion, and increasing the complexity, connectivity and quality of habitat.

- Restore/enhance riparian habitat
  - ✓ Bank stabilization
  - ✓ Invasive species control
  - ✓ Native plant restoration

- Restore/enhance in-stream habitat
  - ✓ Install in-stream structures to improve geomorphological processes and habitat for fish and aquatic organisms

HABITAT

Competitive projects will:

- ✓ Improve water quality
- ✓ Reduce erosion
- ✓ Add habitat complexity and quality
- ✓ Increase habitat connectivity
- ✓ Generate healthier fish and wildlife populations

Priority to projects that:

- ✓ Improve native/natural habitat
- ✓ Benefit species of concern
- ✓ Encourage biodiversity
- ✓ Increase resilience of habitats and waterways

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS - Primary Strategies

Support nature-based solutions that improve stormwater capture and storage to mitigate runoff, combined sewer overflows, basement backups and reduce flooding through nature-based design.

- Install and maintain nature-based solutions
  - ✓ Nature-based or hybrid infrastructure (rain gardens, bioswales, etc.)
- Restore urban forests

- Create and enhance constructed or urban wetlands
- Maintain existing nature-based solutions
  - ✓ Achieve dual benefits – improve efficacy of nature-based solutions to reduce flood risk, improve natural areas for community

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS

Competitive projects will:

✓ Be developed through community input

✓ Engage community-level partners throughout the life of the project and beyond

✓ Incorporate planning for increasingly severe and more frequent storm events into project design, location, and/or function

✓ Utilize native or non-invasive, urban-adapted plant and tree species

✓ Connect to a larger nature-based solutions/stormwater plan

✓ Maintenance: outline authority to maintain sites

✓ Be of sufficient size and scope

➢ **Projects must add or maintain a minimum 100,000 gallons of stormwater storage capacity annually to be competitive**
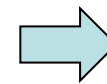
- EPA Stormwater Calculator
- i-Tree

ACTIVATE RESTORED HABITATS AND NATURAL AREAS

Activate restored habitats and natural areas, including those previously funded by GLRI or NFWF, by increasing community engagement, public access, and long-term stewardship of habitats.

- Projects <u>must</u> strategically advance multiple priorities: 1) enhance natural areas through restoration/stewardship and 2) create new opportunities for everyone to get out and enjoy nature.

1. Habitat stewardship and restoration activities may include:
   - Adaptive management, invasive species control, habitat restoration to improve habitat quality and enhance resilience of restored project sites

ACTIVATE RESTORED HABITATS AND NATURAL AREAS

2. Activation strategies may include:

- Public education programs and experiences in natural areas

- Conservation-oriented workforce development programs

- Enhancing volunteerism and long-term stewardship

- Training the next generation of conservationists and nature enthusiasts

- Creation of new or enhance existing public-access infrastructure including:

  - Trails, natural spaces, nature-based or nature compatible recreation, public access points, infrastructure enabling use of waterways and habitats, such as paddle craft launches, wildlife viewing areas, gathering spaces etc

These priorities (1 and 2) must complement each other will not be competitive as stand-alone requests.

ACTIVATE RESTORED HABITATS AND NATURAL AREAS

All applicants submitting a proposal under this funding category should reach out to NFWF staff to discuss proposed activities prior to submitting a proposal

Project Considerations:

- Span up to 3 years or 3 field seasons to increase sustainability and long-term success.

- Projects should be of sufficient size, scope, or unique ecological value to necessitate a strategic re-investment in the previously restored habitat.

- Projects should not request funding to support: long-term transportation to sites, stand-alone parking lots or other infrastructure that is not required for project success, planned or sustained site maintenance activities such as cleaning, mowing, annual repairs to existing infrastructure etc.

METRICS & MONITORING

- Priority will be given to projects that include a monitoring plan to measure outcomes. This should:
  - ✓ Indicate the metrics used to track progress & quantify outcomes
  - ✓ Outline approach to quantify baseline conditions to allow assessment
  - ✓ Demonstrate plans/resources for post-implementation monitoring

- Describe activities/outcomes in terms of quantitative metrics
  - ✓ Recommended metrics listed in RFP & Easygrants
  - ✓ Specify other metrics as needed

- Grant funding can support monitoring activities
  - ✓ Project may allocate up to 15% of budget
  - ✓ Some projects may warrant a higher percentage

LONG-TERM OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

- ≥5 year plan required

- Plan elements:

  - ✓ Actions needed
  - ✓ Access to or ownership of supplies needed
  - ✓ Cost estimates
  - ✓ Likely sources of funding
  - ✓ Responsible parties
  - ✓ Training needs
  - ✓ Capacity for long-term stewardship

- If applicable, describe long term invasive species management and EDRR protocol

- Portion of grant funding may be used for plan development

- Plan must be completed prior to grant end date

FULL PROPOSAL PROCESS

- No pre-proposal stage

- Full Proposals due July 30 in Easygrants (easygrants.nfwf.org)

  - ✓ Longer narrative (5 pages max.)
  - ✓ Project map
  - ✓ Metrics
  - ✓ Line item budget
  - ✓ Matching contributions
  - ✓ Letters of support required
  - ✓ Financial documents required

- Additional guidance documents available

- Contact us if you have questions or concerns

NFWF

Chi-Cal Rivers Fund 2025 - Full Proposal Project Narrative

Instructions: Save this document on your computer and complete the narrative in the format provided. The final narrative should not exceed 5 (five) pages; font should be 12-point Times New Roman. Do not delete the text provided below. Once complete, upload this document into the on-line application as instructed.

1. **Funding Category:** List the Funding Category that best describes the proposed project (see RFP).

2. **Context:** Briefly describe the project context in terms of current conditions, connection to current or previous on-the-ground work, existing challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Applicants with existing Chi-Cal Rivers Fund grant(s) should provide a brief status update for active project(s) and discuss how the existing grant is connected to the proposed project.

3. **Activities and Outcomes:** Detail the project activities proposed and the timeline for project implementation. Discuss how these activities will generate direct, measurable benefits to the priority waterways. Discuss how the project will generate multiple benefits, for example: wildlife, communities and habitat/water quality. Share anticipated outcomes in terms of metrics (e.g., acres restored, gallons stormwater storage added, etc.) relevant to the project activities.

4. **Tracking Metrics and Monitoring:** Indicate how the project will monitor/assess progress toward the metrics and outcomes identified in the application. Note any challenges or limitations anticipated with tracking metrics. If the proposed project is expected to directly benefit priority bird, fish or wildlife species, describe how project activities will achieve these benefits and plans for species monitoring.

5. **Long-Term Operation and Maintenance:** Indicate how project benefits will be sustained through time. Detail existing long-term operation and maintenance plan(s) or describe efforts to a maintenance plan during the grant period. Plans should include projected or anticipated investment performance over at least 5 years, anticipated useful life of project elements (GSI construction, habitat restoration/management practices), municipal engagement, and maintenance activities.

6. **Project Team and Partnerships:** List the individuals who will lead the project and describe their qualifications and experience. Describe additional project partners and their role in the proposed project. Describe the community(ies) and/or user groups who will benefit from and be engaged in project development, implementation, activation and maintenance.

COMPETITIVE PROJECTS

- Applicants must demonstrate capacity & experience commensurate with the scale and funding request of the project

- Occur near or otherwise directly benefit the major system waterways

- Align with & demonstrate how projects will complement and connect to other existing regional strategies

- Shovel-ready - project can begin shortly after grant is awarded

- Apply most (≥70%) grant funding to on-the ground improvements (does not apply to funding category 3)

- Include long-lasting benefits, as demonstrated by provisions for long-term (5-year) maintenance, operation, and management plans

- Meaningfully engage and benefit local communities

Dan Wendt
MWRDGC

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

- Start date should be no earlier than November 5, 2025

- Two years or field seasons for Categories 1 and 2. Three years or field seasons for category 3

- Matching contributions must be spent or applied between project start and end dates

MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

- Match is not required

- Ratio of matching contributions to grant funding requested is considered during the review process and projects that offer match and are cost effective are more competitive

- May be federal or non-federal

- Match eligibility
  - ✓ Verifiable from the grantee's records
  - ✓ Not included as contributions for any other award
  - ✓ Necessary & reasonable to accomplish project or program objectives
  - ✓ Not paid by the Federal government under another Federal award except when authorized by Federal statute (applicable to Federal match only)
  - ✓ Are allowable under OMB Cost Principles (applicable to Federal match only)
  - ✓ Committed directly to the project and must be used within the period of performance

ACCEPTED MATCH SOURCES

- Cash

- In-kind contributions of staff

- Materials and services donated

- Volunteer time

- Cost of land acquisition/easement

- Allowable indirect costs not covered by grant funding

- Other tangible contributions to project goals

How to Apply in Easygrants

Project Information

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

Project start and end dates: Start within three months of the award announcement date (November 5, 2025) and end within two-three years of the start date, depending on funding category.

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

Map your project at the finest scale by any of the three options:

Upload Shapefile

- Select a Zip file(.zip) containing a shapefile(.shp,.dbf,.prj) from your local file system.
- The shapefile must be of POLYGON geometry type.
- The shapefile must not exceed 1 MB.

Choose File   No file chosen

Select By Geography

Draw a Custom Area

My project area:

Uploaded Feature 1		
Uploaded Feature 2		
Uploaded Feature 3		
1		
2		

Submit Project Location

Submitted Project Locations
Pending Project Locations
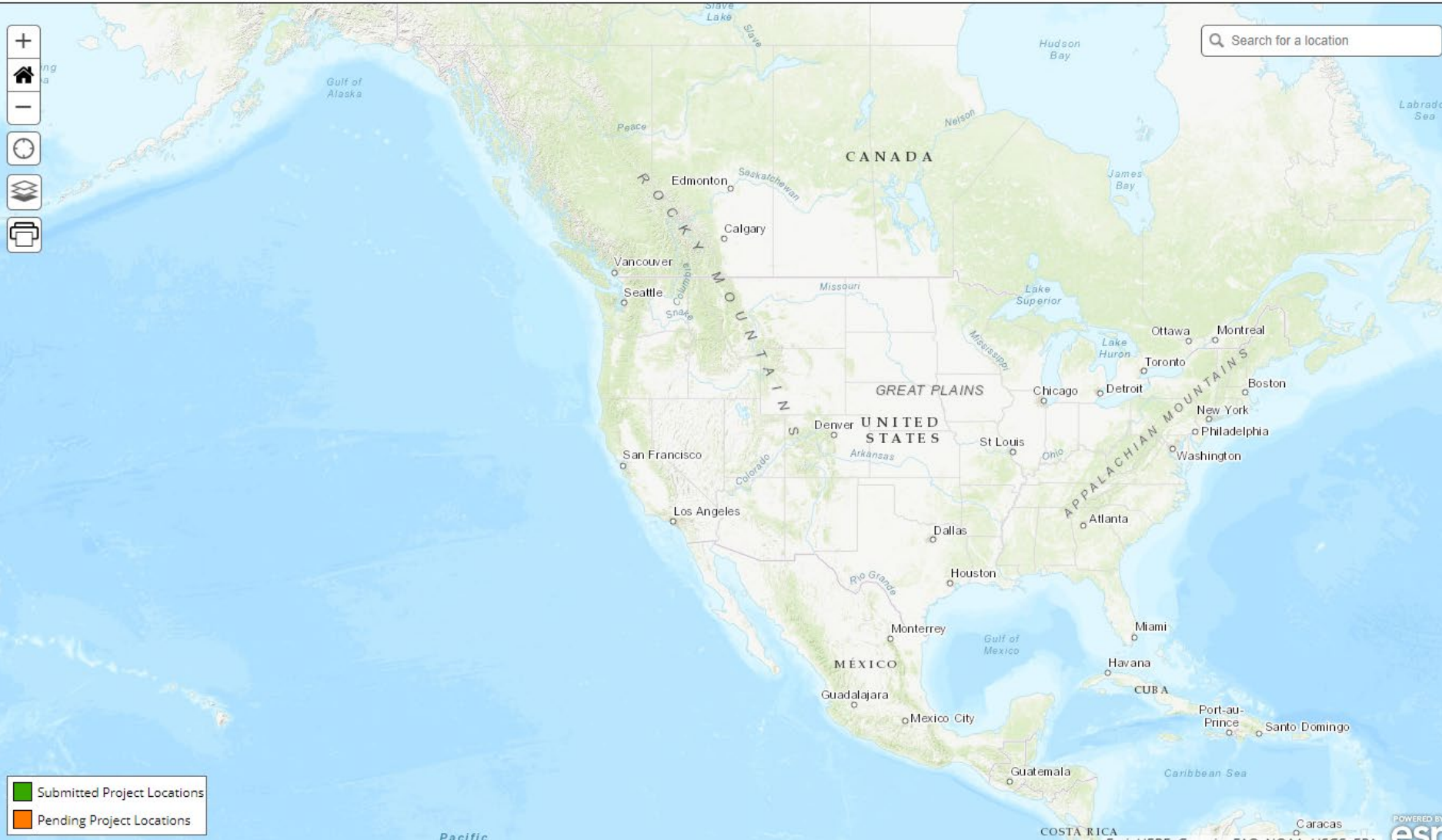
Uploads

Upload Checklist

Upload Type	Required	Template
Full Proposal Narrative	Yes	Full Proposal Narrative Template 2010
Project Map	Yes	
Letters of Support	No	
Photos - Jpeg	No	
Statement of Litigation	Yes	Statement of Litigation
Board of Trustees, Directors, or equivalent	Yes	
GAAP audited financial statements	Yes	
IRS Form 990	Yes	
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

METRICS

- All possible outcome metrics are listed in Easygrants & selected during the Full Proposal application process

  example of metrics listed in the RFP shown on the right

- Only metrics relevant to the proposed project should be selected

- Grantees will be required to report progress toward project outcomes in terms of the metrics selected

Recommended Metrics *Required metric*	Additional Guidance
Riparian restoration – miles restored	Enter the number of riparian miles restored, including riparian buffers. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland), the dominant vegetation being planted (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp), and the average width of the riparian buffer. Indicate the miles of riparian habitat restored along priority waterways. Include miles of invasive species control, bank stabilization, and native vegetation restoration.
Floodplain restoration – acres restored	Enter # of floodplain acres restored. In the NOTES, indicate % of vegetation on the pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%) and the dominant vegetation being restored (Broadleaf, Conifer, Redwood, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp).
Instream restoration – miles restored	Enter the number of miles of stream/channel restored or naturalized, include installation of in-stream habitat structures and stream geomorphology restoration activities (impoundment removal, naturalize stream channel, etc.)
Instream restoration - # habitat structures installed	Enter the number of habitat structures installed, replaced, upgraded, or repaired for improvement of instream habitat.
# 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. Please provide the barrier name(s) or ID(s) will be removed.
Miles of stream 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.

METRICS

▶ Instructions

Follow the steps below to provide NFWF with metrics for showing progress on your project's primary activities and outcomes. More detailed instructions, screenshots, and examples are provided in the Metrics Help page displayed when you click **Help**. You may save and return to this page as often as needed to complete your metrics.

1. To view and select the available metrics, click **Select Metric**. A page will display all of the available metrics. If the list of available metrics is long, you can filter the list by clicking on the *Show:* options – **Templates** and/or **Strategies:** Templates allows you to filter on metric templates, if there is more than one; Strategies allows you to filter on a single Strategy, *e.g.,* Habitat Management – *Show All* is the default for both. For more details on each metric, "mouse-over" the question mark icon.
2. To select your metrics, check the box in the *Add* column for the metrics on which you will report, and click **Add Selected**. The table below will refresh and display the metrics. You must select and report on at least one metric on this page, and the Foundation's strong preference is for projects to contain a limited number of metrics for showing progress.
3. For each of your selected metrics, enter both *Starting Value* (*i.e.,* the actual number at the start of your project), and a *Target Value* (*i.e.,* the projected number at the completion of your project) amounts. Notes may be added to a metric by clicking the sheet icon to the right of the Completion number.
4. Click **Save** intermittently to save your data. The system will timeout after 60 minutes of non-use, and any unsaved data will be lost.
5. To remove a metric after you've selected it, click the **red X** to the right of the line item. To delete several metrics at once, click the checkbox to the left of each metric name and click **Delete Selected** at the bottom of the page. The system will request confirmation before deleting Metrics, and the page will refresh with the remaining metrics. All metrics remaining on the page must contain values before final submission.
6. When you are finished providing values, click **Save and Continue** to save your metrics and move to the next page.

Note: The metrics provided here are those selected by the Foundation. If you would like to report on additional metrics, please include these in your project narrative.

▶ Applicant Submission Version

Filter By: [Show All Templates ▼] [Show All Strategies ▼]   [Select Metric]

	Metric		Strategies	Required	Starting Value		Target value			
☐	SOGL - BMP Implementation - # of BMPs implemented	❓	Habitat Management	Recommended	0.00	# of BMPs implemented	10.00	# of BMPs implemented	📄	✖
☐	SOGL - Economic benefits - # jobs created	❓	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives	Recommended	0.00	# jobs created	12.00	# jobs created		✖
☐	SOGL - Economic benefits - # jobs sustained	❓	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives	Recommended	0.00	# jobs sustained	2.00	# jobs sustained		✖
☐	SOGL - Erosion control - Lbs sediment avoided	❓	Habitat Restoration	Recommended	0.00	Lbs sediment avoided	1,073.00	Lbs sediment avoided	📄	✖
☐	SOGL - Green Infrastructure - Acres of greenspace	❓	Habitat Management	Recommended	0.00	Acres of greenspace	38.00	Acres of greenspace	📄	✖

NARRATIVE

- Core of the proposal

- Download template as soon as possible

- Ensure the narrative expands upon metrics and tells the story of the project's potential impact answering these questions:
  - Why is this project important?
  - Why is it needed now?
  - How will the project deliver on RFP goals?
  - How are partners and communities engaged?
  - How will you know if the project is successful?

NFWF

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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.
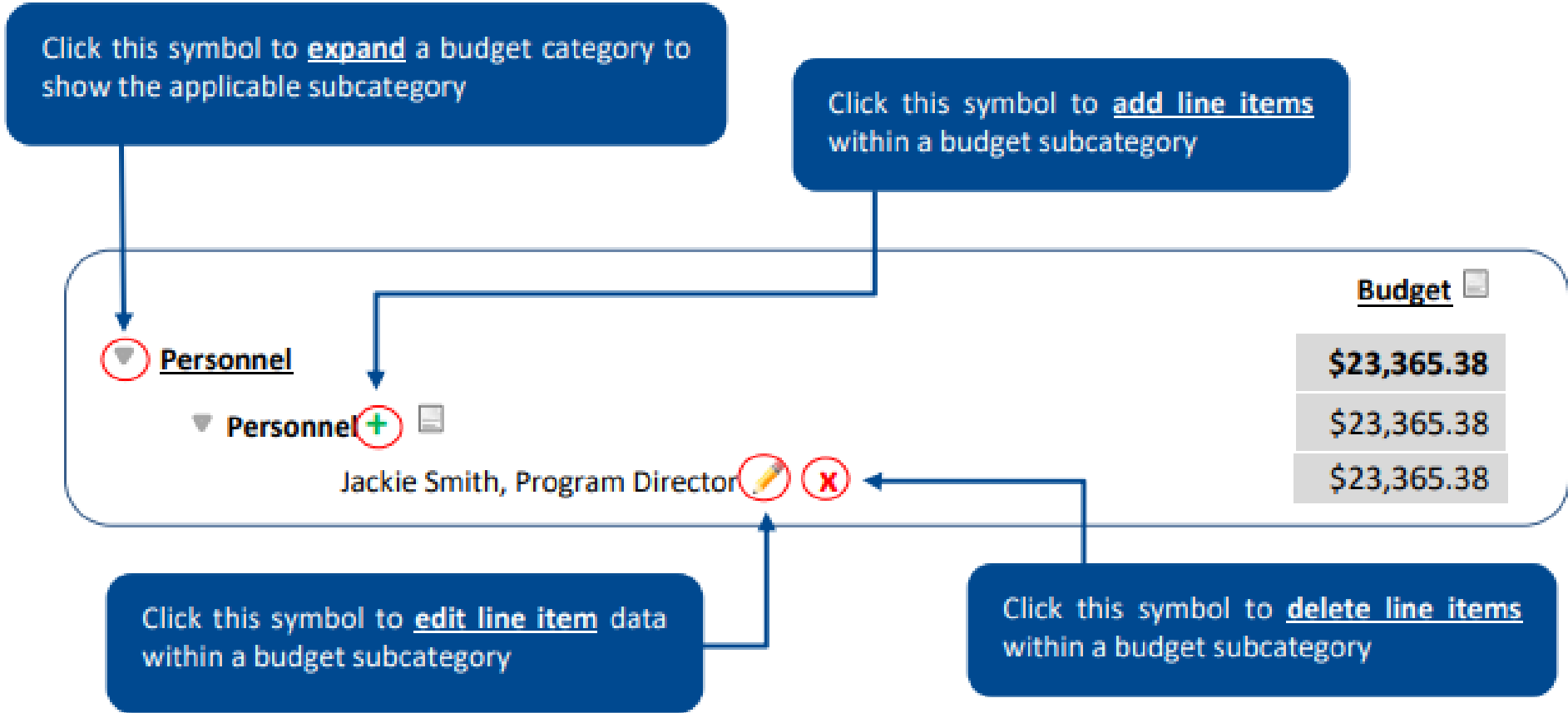
- Matching contributions should not be included in the budget.

Budget	
Budget	**Budget**
Personnel	$0.00
Travel	$0.00
Equipment	$0.00
Materials and Supplies	$0.00
Contractual Services	$0.00
Other Direct Costs	$0.00
Total Direct Costs	$0.00
Total Indirect Costs	$0.00
Total Costs	$0.00

BUDGET

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.

# APPLICATION ASSISTANCE – REFERENCE SHEET

Supporting Documents:

1. Chi-Cal Rivers Fund 2025 RFP webpage
   a. Tip Sheet
      - Step-by-step proposal guidance
   b. Easygrants Instructional Webinar
      - Step-by-step video tutorial on how to start and complete a proposal in Easygrants

2. NFWF Application Information
   a. Budget instructions
      - Download the Detailed Budget and Narrative Guide
      - *For the Full Proposal Budget section, please provide a respective budget narrative describing the purpose of each line item towards the project.
   b. Required financial documents
      - Financial documents must be for the same fiscal year and **no more than 2 years old**
   c. Indirect Cost Policy

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE – NFWF WEBSITE (WWW.NFWF.ORG)
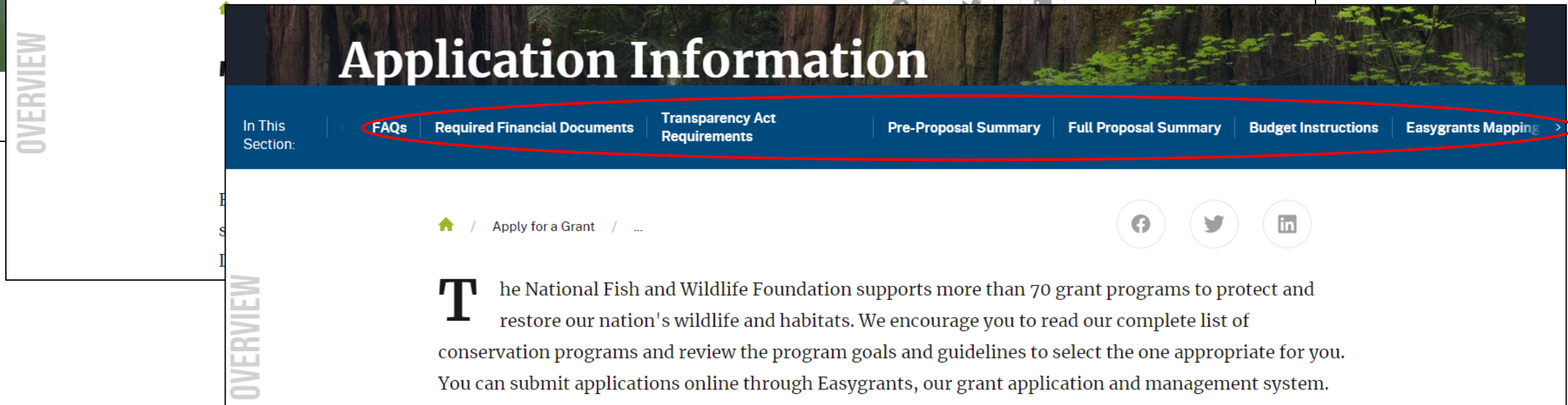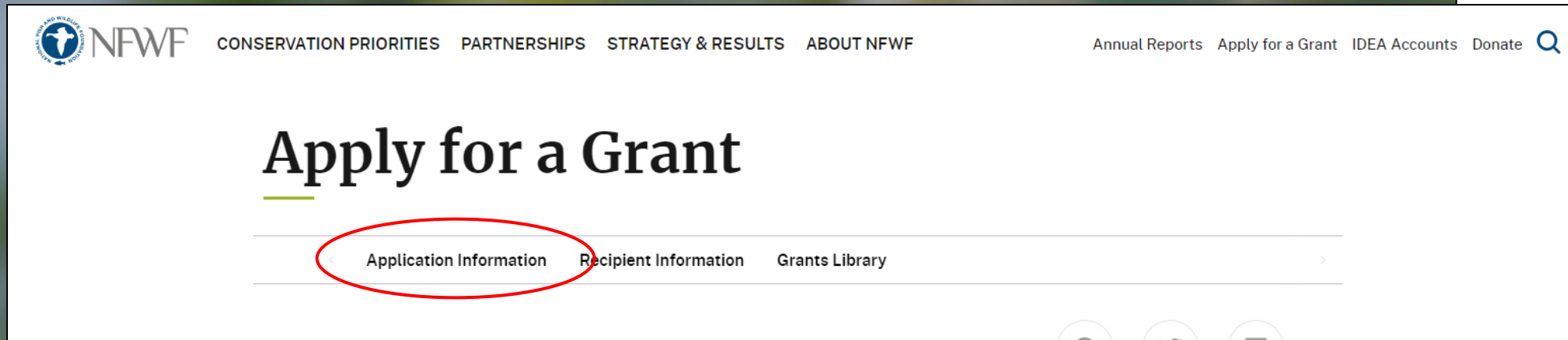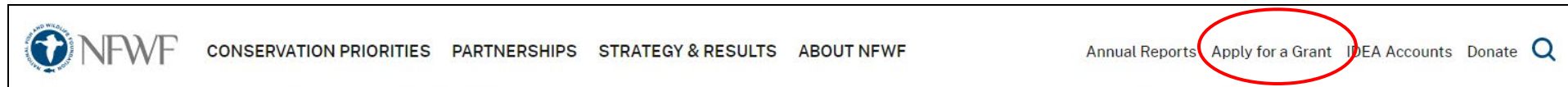
TIMELINE

- Full Proposals due: **July 30, 2025 by 10:59 PM CT**

- Grant awards announced: **November 2025**

- Grant agreements developed: **November 2025 – March 2025**

CONTACT INFORMATION

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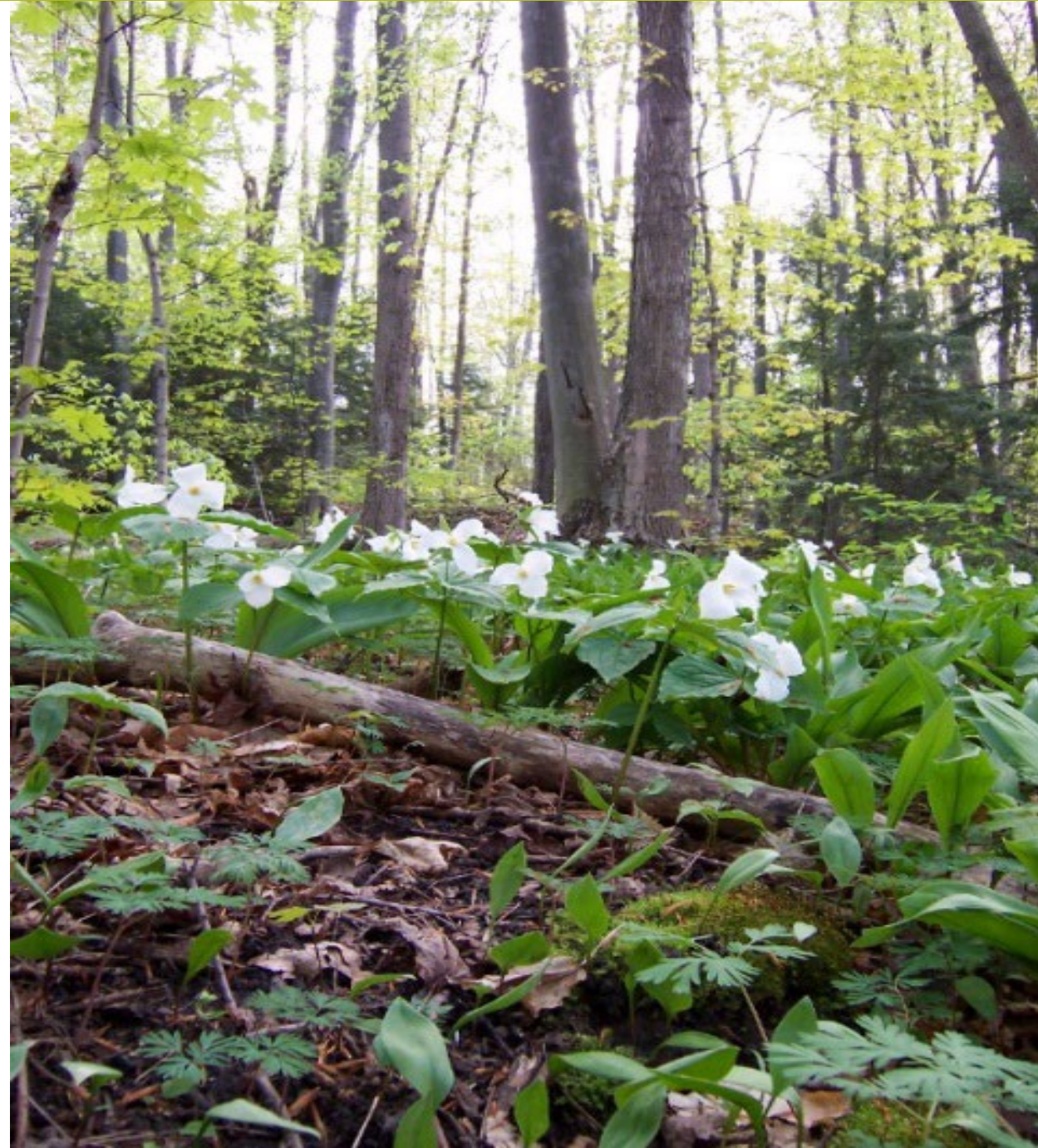612-564-7296
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Chi–Cal Rivers Fund

https://www.nfwf.org/programs/chi-cal-rivers-fund