

Dedicated to supporting watershed restoration and vegetation management projects on National Forest System lands to achieve a healthy forest ecosystem



General Session Agenda

- 1. Introduction to NFWF
- 2. Program Context and Priorities
- 3. Review of Request for Proposals
 - Qualifications
 - Evaluation and Guidelines
 - Proposal Component Breakdown
- 4. Frequently Asked Questions
- 5. Using Easygrants



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Introduction to NFWF

WHO WE ARE

- Chartered by Congress in 1984
- 30-member Board appointed by Secretary of the Interior
 - Includes FWS Director & NOAA Administrator

WHAT WE DO

- Sustain, restore, enhance the nation's natural heritage
- Support collaboration among federal agencies & private funders
- Create common ground among diverse interests

HOW WE DO IT

- Leverage private money with public funding average 3:1
- On-the-ground conservation projects through competitive grant making

NFWFIS

• An implementer – we fund projects

NFWFIS NOT

 An advocacy or litigation organization and does not fund these activities



Public-Private Partnerships

Private Partners





























Convener of focused, leveraged funding and leadership for priority wildlife and habitat conservation through grant making.



Federal Partners



















6,800+ Grantees





















































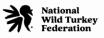














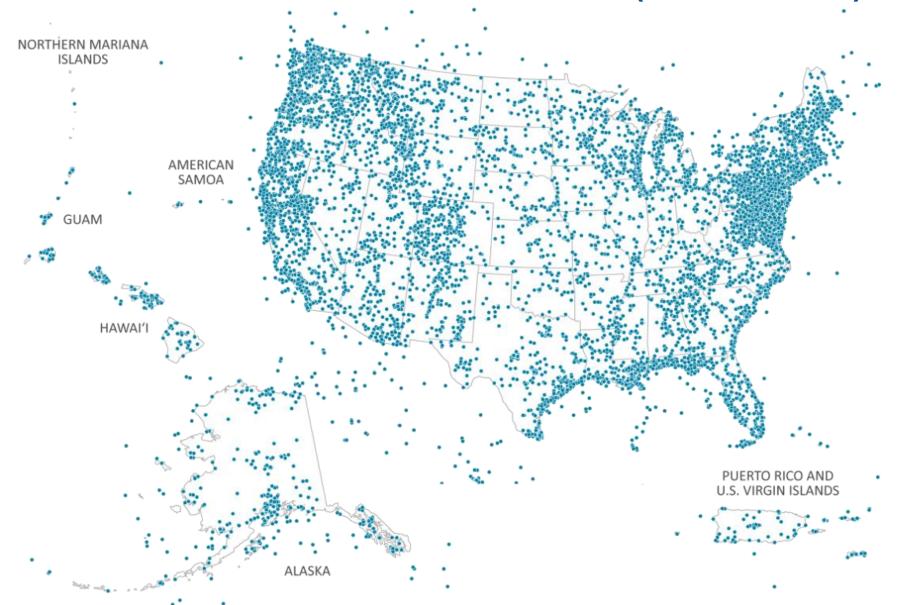








NFWF Conservation Investments (1984 – 2024)



- 23,300 Investments
- 7,000+ Organizations
- All 50 states



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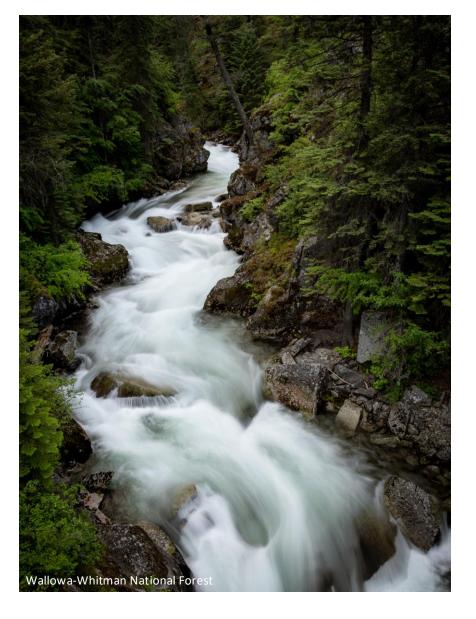




What is the Healthy American Forests Initiative?

• A one-time initiative that harnesses conservation funding and expertise from the U.S. Forest Service to support locally-led, cross-boundary, multi-state, and/or landscape-scale restoration projects on National Forest System lands.

	·	
	Program Themes	Program Priorities
	Vegetation management or watershed restoration projects on National Forest System land	Expand Habitat ConnectivityProvide a Range of Ecosystem Services
•	Conserving and restoring forests, grasslands and other important ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks	 Strengthen Ecosystem and Community Health Expand Public Access to Nature
•	Increase forest management and reduce wildfire risk to promote healthy forests and increase timber productions	 Contribute to Local and/or Regional Economies Contribute to Workforce Development
•	Improving ecosystem and community resilience to wildfire, flooding, drought, and other disaster-related threats	
•	Expanding access to the outdoors	



Program Timeline



Applicant Webinar Recording Available: Wednesday, October 17

Full Proposal Due Date: Tuesday, January 13

Review Committee Meetings: January – March

NFWF Board Review: May

Award Announced: June



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Qualifications

Eligible: Non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, tribal governments and organizations, and educational institutions

Projects should focus on vegetation management or watershed restoration on National Forest System land. These projects must be carried out in accordance with a water source protection plan as developed under section 303(d)(1) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003 or a watershed restoration action plan developed under section 304(a)(3) of HFRA of 2003. Associated activities may include removal of vegetation, the use of prescribed fire, restoration of aquatic habitat, or the decommissioning of an unauthorized, temporary, or system road to enhance or restore the ecological function and health of a forest ecosystem.

> Size: \$250,000 to \$2 million

Length: Up to 2 years

➤ Geographic Focus: Must be on National Forest System lands

Grants are contingent upon receipt of funds from federal agencies and/or other funding partners

Matching Requirements

- Projects are required to provide nonfederal match valued at 20% of total project costs (25% of the grant request to NFWF).
- If you are unable to meet the match requirements, please reach out to NFWF staff when you submit your application.



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Evaluation Criteria

- All proposals will be evaluated using 4 major criteria: Conservation Outcomes, Technical Merit, Partnership and Community Impact, and Budget
- Every HAFI proposal will be evaluated by a minimum of three reviewers
- Final funding decisions will be based on proposal scoring and additional factors (e.g. geographic distribution of projects, variety of HAFI program priorities addressed, and performance on prior and/or current NFWF grants)



Evaluation Criteria Continued – Competitive Proposals



Conservation outcomes

- Alignment with program goals and priorities
- Quantifiable performance metrics
- Appropriate monitoring of activities and outcomes
- Long-term project sustainability

Technical Merit

- Technically sound and feasible
- Engage technical experts
- Logical and achievable work plan/timeline
- Sound compliance approach (permits, NEPA)
- Accurate spatial data

Evaluation Criteria Continued – Competitive Proposals

Partnership and Community Impact

- Collaborates with local community
- Partners help sustain impact of project
- Proposal identifies communities impacted
- Includes letters of support from community partners

Budget

- Allowable and reasonable costs
- Matching contributions
- Cost effective



Federal Funding Compliance Implications and Requirements



- HAFI projects will be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA; state and federal), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and Clean Water Act (CWA)
 - 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)
- Be sure to budget time and resources towards completing these requirements and obtaining all necessary permits and clearances
- For additional questions about these requirements, please reach out to our environmental compliance contractor, SWCA Environmental Consultants (<u>atbcregulatory@swca.com</u>)

Overall Proposal Guidelines - Highlights

- Project periods of performance cannot start prior to August 31, 2023 or end after May 30, 2028 [Correction: This end date replaces the one mentioned in the HAFI webinar recording].
- If you haven't thought about permits and compliance yet, START NOW!
- Ensure your SAM registration (SAM.gov) and audit requirements are up to date (https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/required-financial-documents)
- Provide measurable outputs and outcomes, choose your metrics wisely, and provide details requested
- Start collecting your letters of support allow for additional time for your Forest Service contacts (write templates for your partners)
- Pursuant to OMB rules, indirect <u>is allowed</u> please review the policy on our website (https://www.nfwf.org/grants/application-information/indirect-cost-calculator)
- Complete your budget narratives! Please review guidance on our website (https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/nfwf-detailed-budget-narrative-guide.pdf)
- Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds:
 - Support of ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements
 - Support of political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations

Applicant Assistance Opportunities and Resources

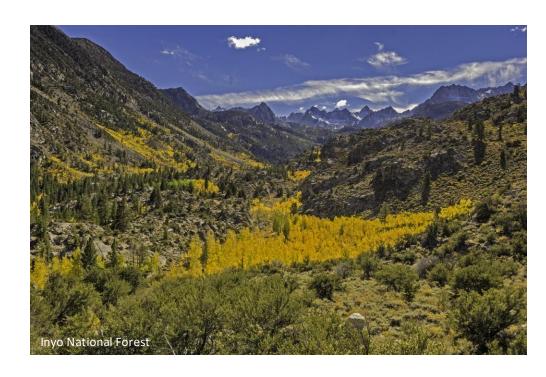
- RFP and supporting materials are available on our website
 - Tip sheet for help navigating RFP and Easygrants
- Proposal lab sessions with NFWF staff and Field Liaisons
 - Available October January
- Applicants submit proposal through Easygrants portal
 - Due January 13th
 - Email <u>easygrants@nfwf.org</u> for help with Easygrants issues
- Webinar recording available on website
- NFWF staff and Field Liaisons are available to assist
 - ECT, Inc.
 - NAFWS

Please email us if you have any questions!

Sydney.Godbey@nfwf.org

Ericka.Popovich@nfwf.org

Zoey.Apelt@nfwf.org





Field Liaison Support

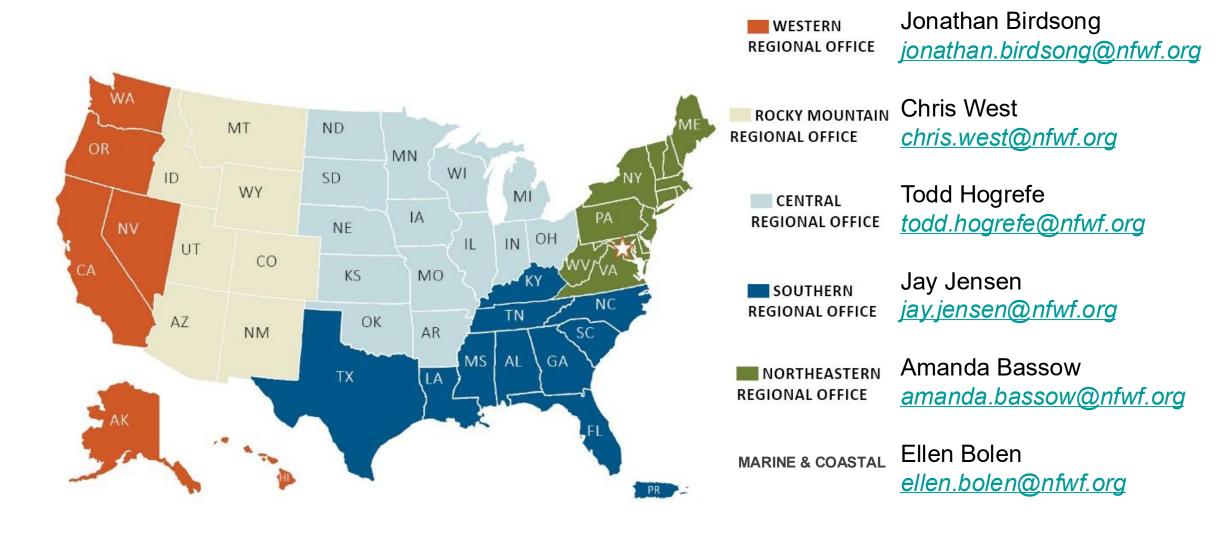
NFWF is contracting with <u>Native American Fish and Wildlife Society</u> and <u>Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc.</u> to provide HAFI applicants and grantees with additional assistance.

Healthy American Forests Initiative Field Liaisons

FIELD LIAISON CONTACT	EMAIL	SECTOR EXPERTISE
NAFWS	mhawkins@nafws.org, aedwards@nafws.org, kschultz@nafws.org	All Sectors, Tribally-led projects
Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc.	NationalProgramLiaisons@ectinc.com	All Sectors



NFWF's Conservation Team: Key Contacts



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Full Proposal Sections

- Contact Information
- Organization Information
- Project Information
 - Start date, End date, Description, Abstract, Requested amount from NFWF
- Project Location
- Map
- Uploads
 - Required: Proposal narrative, WRAP or WSPP, USFS
 Letter of Support
 - Not required: Other Documents, Letters of Support,
 Photos
- Metrics
- Budget
- Matching Contributions
- Permits and Approvals
- Review and Submit



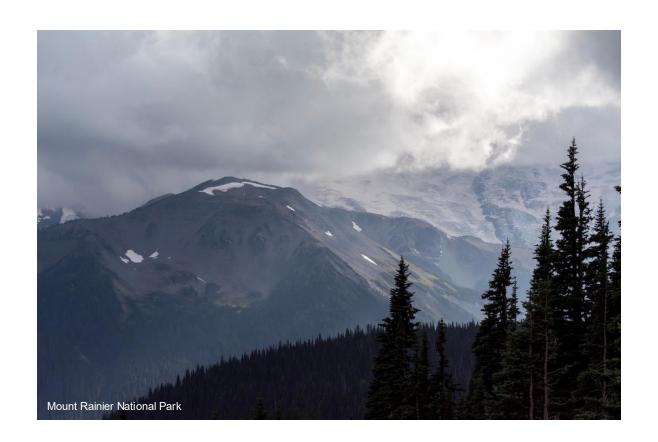
Contact and Organization Information

Contact Information:

- Enter the contact information for the primary person responsible for completing the Easygrants application (this person is tagged as the Principal).
- Only one person can be assigned to the proposal task in Easygrants

Organization Information:

- Use the "Select Organization" button to search for your organization; you can search by Name, EIN number, or UEI number.
- If your organization is new to Easygrants, click the "Add New" button at bottom of list and fill out your organization's information.



Project Information

- Refrain from using pronouns such as I, we, our, etc.
- **Project Title:** Short and descriptive
- Project Start Date: Begin within five months of the award announcement date
- Project End Date: Timeline should align with initiative requirements
- **Description:** Should be two sentences long. The first sentence should state the main activity/method being used on the specific species/habitat and location. The second sentence should state the expected outcomes.
- **Abstract:** Should be a more detailed description; three to four sentences elaborating on the project description. Additional details should include location, purpose, major activities, target species, specific habitat, outcomes and deliverables, and partnerships.
- **Project Location Description**: Should be concise and specific. Please include the state and county/city where the project will occur when applicable. <u>Include the name of the National Forest or National Grassland</u>.
- Requested Amount: Should be the amount you are asking for from NFWF



Uploads - Full Proposal Narrative



- "Heart" of the proposal the opportunity to provide the most detail about the need, goals, and vision of the project, and articulate the activities and impact
- 14 questions total, should not exceed 5 pages
- You can adjust the formatting (e.g., change to single spaced, adjust the margins)
- Do not use a font smaller than 10 pt.
- Please ensure the project is eligible for this funding
 - Project location must be on National Forest System lands
 - Include detailed information about the WRAP or WSPP your project aligns with

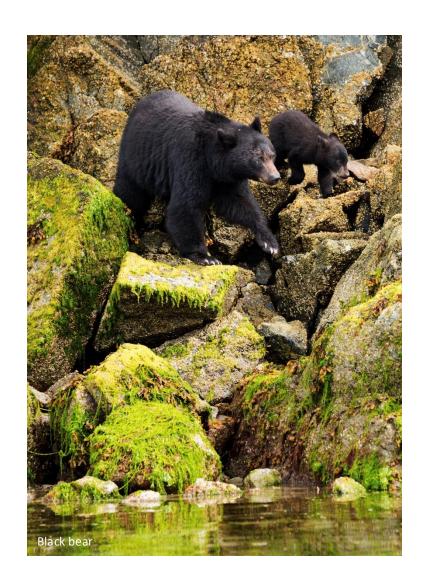
Full Proposal Narrative – Question 1 and 2

Is this project occurring on National Forest System (NSF) land?

- Provide the names of the locations your project will occur on
- If your project does not occur on NFS land, it is not eligible for this funding

Does this project align with a watershed restoration action plan (WRAP) or a water source protection program (WSPP)?

- Provide details of which option applies to your project
- Upload documents
- If this project does not align with a WRAP or a WSPP, it is not eligible for this funding



Full Proposal Narrative – Question 3 and 4

Do you have a letter of support provided by each Forest Service Unit?

- For each project location, upload a letter of support from the corresponding Forest Service Unit
- Letter must be signed by an authorized signatory from the Forest Service Unit

Have you discussed Federal Environmental Compliance (NEPA, ESA, NHPA) with Forest Service Units?

• Provide a status update on where your project is at in this process



Full Proposal Narrative – Question 5 and 6

What are the primary project outcomes and why is this project needed?

- Describe the overall goal of the project or the ultimate vision
- Provide context about why this project needs to occur in this location, at this time, and with these partners
- Highlight the importance and impact of the project

What are the major project activities?

- Associated activities may include:
 - Removal of vegetation
 - Use of prescribed fire
 - Restoration of aquatic habitat, or
 - Decommissioning of an unauthorized, temporary, or system road



Full Proposal Narrative – Question 7 and 8



What are the major project actions?

- Use the table in the narrative template
- Include a workplan with estimated timeframes
- For each action provide an estimated percentage of the budget that will be dedicated to each action

Which of the following additional program priorities will be addressed?

- Associated activities may include:
 - Expand habitat connectivity
 - Provide a range of ecosystem services
 - Strengthen ecosystem and community health
 - Expand public access to nature
 - Contribute to local and/or regional economies
 - Contribute to workforce development

Full Proposal Narrative – Question 9 and 10



How will project success be defined or measured?

 List out metrics you will be recording to determine progress throughout the life of the project, and explain how those connect to the program priorities

Who are the partners working on this project and what are their contributions to the project?

- Tell us who your partners are and explain how they will support and contribute to the project outcomes and activities
- Include detail about existing relationship with partners when possible

Full Proposal Narrative – Question 11 and 12



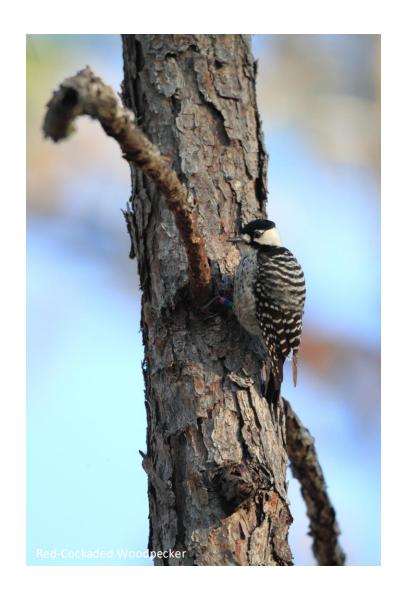
Who are the key individuals on the project team and how will they contribute to the project?

• List out the primary individuals that will be working on this project, and briefly explain their position, relevancy, and qualifications

How will communities be engaged in project development and implementation?

- List any outreach and engagement activities that will occur throughout the project and explain who will be impacted by or benefit from those activities and why you are doing them (i.e., who are these activities for and why?)
- Include any relevant engagement activities done prior to this project (previous work/engagement with the same stakeholder group, earlier outreach/engagement that impacted the design for this project, etc.)
- If your project does not include engagement activities that's okay! Just state that directly and explain why

Full Proposal Narrative – Question 13 and 14



How will this project improve forest health, leading to increased timber productivity?

• Discuss the focus areas of your project that will lead to healthier forests (e.g. tree density management, pest and disease control, fuel reduction etc.)

What are the plans for sustaining the project outcomes beyond the grant period?

• Project should have long-lasting ecological impacts. Discuss how the outcomes of the project will be maintained or how they will contribute to the goals of future projects.

Uploads - Requirements



- Watershed restoration action plan (WRAP) or a water source protection plan (WSPP) this is a required upload; there is no page limit, and most file types are accepted
- Letters of Support a signed letter of support from each the National Forest Unit(s) in which the project will be implemented is required, but additional letters can be included.
 - Combine into one document with a cover page, review our detailed <u>Letters of Support Best Practices</u> guide; avoid using Adobe Portfolio
- Other Documents project maps, budget quotes, detailed workplans, fact sheets (do NOT upload full plans or designs with massive file sizes, please consider links when possible)
- **Photos** e.g., before photos, project examples, engagement activities

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Frequently Asked Question – 1



Q: Can an organization submit more than one application for this RFP?

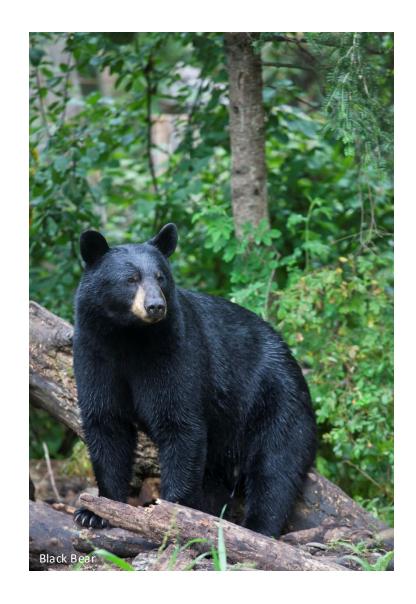
A: Yes, more than one application may be submitted, but please note that anything beyond two or three submissions may see diminished competitiveness. We generally encourage applicants to submit the one or two of their best projects per RFP. Please do not submit the same project multiple times. If submitting multiple proposals, please indicate priorities if any.

Q: What sort of information should be included in project context?

A: While NFWF, our funding partners, and our proposal reviewers have extensive conservation and restoration expertise, they may not know the context of your particular project. Please do make every effort to tell us why this is the right time for this project, why these are the right actions to take, and why it should happen in this geographic location. Also describe any additional plans (municipal, federal, state, tribal, etc.) and goals this project helps deliver—but do not upload each of those full plans with your proposal (you may provide links).

Q: How do we pick which metrics showcase the potential impact of our project? How do we calculate or estimate the target value?

A: Metrics should be reasonable, achievable, and tell a story about your project. You can see the full list of metrics in the RFP. Please include at least one metric relevant to reporting your project's progress. When in Easygrants, hover your mouse cursor over the "?" next to a metric to read its description and specific guidance. For each metric you will need to provide values for "Starting Value" and "Target Value." In nearly all cases the starting value will be zero (0). In your project narrative, you will have the opportunity to describe additional activities and outcomes associated with your project. <u>Please only select metrics associated with the project elements for</u> which you are requesting funding in this grant. Be sure to add metrics notes, click the small notepad icon to the right of a selected metric to add notes. Adding notes to metrics assists reviewers in understanding how values were determined.



Q: Can we request funding for planning, collaboration, engagement and capacity building activities? What if my project is doing both implementation and planning?

A: Activities associated with planning, collaboration, engagement, and capacity building are ineligible as the sole focus of the project but can be included in addition to implementation activities. It will be helpful to show what initial steps are already underway and what partners and/or impacted communities have offered support or buy-in. Be sure to articulate the ultimate potential and vision for the effort. Giving reviewers the full picture—in addition to describing the activities for which funding is requested—will be helpful. If your project includes a combination of planning and implementation, clearly describe each part and how they work together in a seamless effort.



Q: Can you clarify what you mean by capacity building? Will you fund staff positions to help deliver conservation and restoration?

A: We are open to a wide variety of capacity building activities as it relates to increasing the capacity of an organization or collaborative network to deliver on-the-ground restoration or conservation that aligns with the program priorities. In terms of funding full-time positions, while this is an eligible use of funds and budgets should be constructed to adequately reflect what's needed to deliver the project, be aware that full or partial funding of a staff position is not guaranteed after the end date of your project. Be sure to include context on the need for the position and how it will be sustained post-award.



Q: What should I do if my project doesn't have a watershed restoration action plan (WRAP) or a water source protection program (WSPP)?

A: As stated in the Full Proposal Narrative template, if your project does not have a WRAP or WSPP, your project is not eligible for the grant funding.



Q: If we didn't have to undergo an A-133/Single Audit, do we upload a statement to that effect?

A: Depending on your organization type, you may not be required to provide this upload. To see which documents are required of your organization go here: https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/applicationinformation/required-financial-documents. If an upload does not apply to your organization, you will need to upload a simple document stating it is not needed and why in one to two sentences in lieu of the financial document itself. The same applies for the Statement of Litigation requirement (state, local, and tribal governments are not required to complete this document).





Q: We have privacy concerns when it comes to submitting a full proposal. How will the data provided in the proposal be used and distributed?

A: All financial documents submitted will not be shared with reviewers or externally to NFWF. The Foundation will not share identifying information about any particular entity or project and proposal content will be kept confidential.

All reviewers are subject to a confidentiality clause in order to participate and are not allowed to share any proposal details outside of their review.

Final Tips for Applicants

- 1. Print/download the tip sheet and use it as a reference
- 2. Re-read the RFP and reference the linked information provided
- 3. These are competitive grants; projects should address all criteria, respond to all requirements and have a "wow" factor
- 4. Include lots of context and details—do not assume reviewers know about or understand your project!
- 5. Submit your full proposal ON OR BEFORE January 13th
- 6. Reach out if you need help

RESOURCES:

- Tip Sheet
- Bookings Link (Proposal Lab)
- Webinar Recording
- NFWF Staff
- Field Liaisons



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General Tips - Easygrants System easygrants.nfwf.org

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



Step One: Logging in

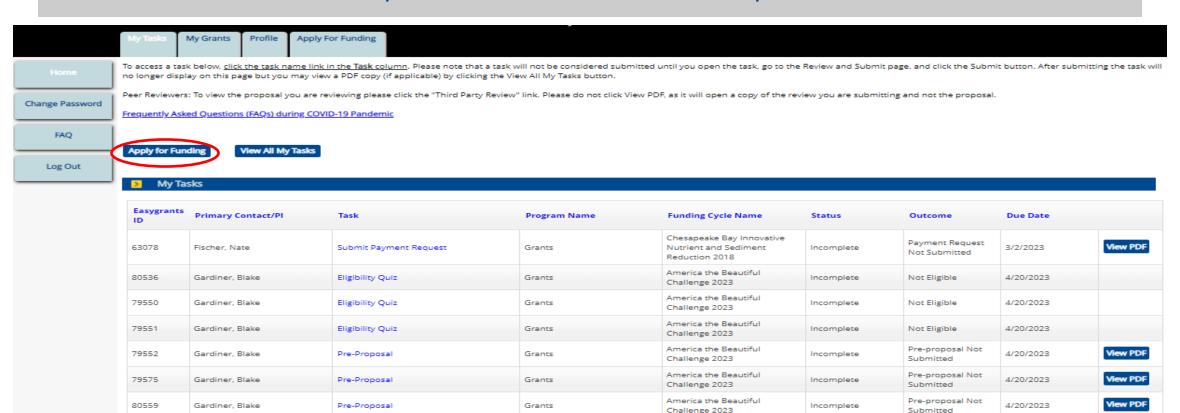


Enter your login ID and password and click Log In below. If you have forgotten your password, click Forgot your password? below.

If you are a first time visitor to this system, click Register here below.

	Freque	ntly Asked Questions				_
Log In					New Use	er?
Login ID / Email						
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ℰ Remember Me				Forgo	ot Passwor	rd?
		Log In				
	For the optimal l	Easygrants experience, ple	ease:			
	i Only Use One	Enable Pop-upsTab	Reade		v Cookies	

Step Two: Locate the Proposal



Grants

Grants

80741

79549

Gardiner, Blake

Gardiner, Blake

Pre-Proposal

Pre-Proposal

America the Beautiful

America the Beautiful

Challenge 2023

Challenge 2023

Pre-proposal Not

Pre-proposal Not

Submitted

Submitted

4/20/2023

4/20/2023

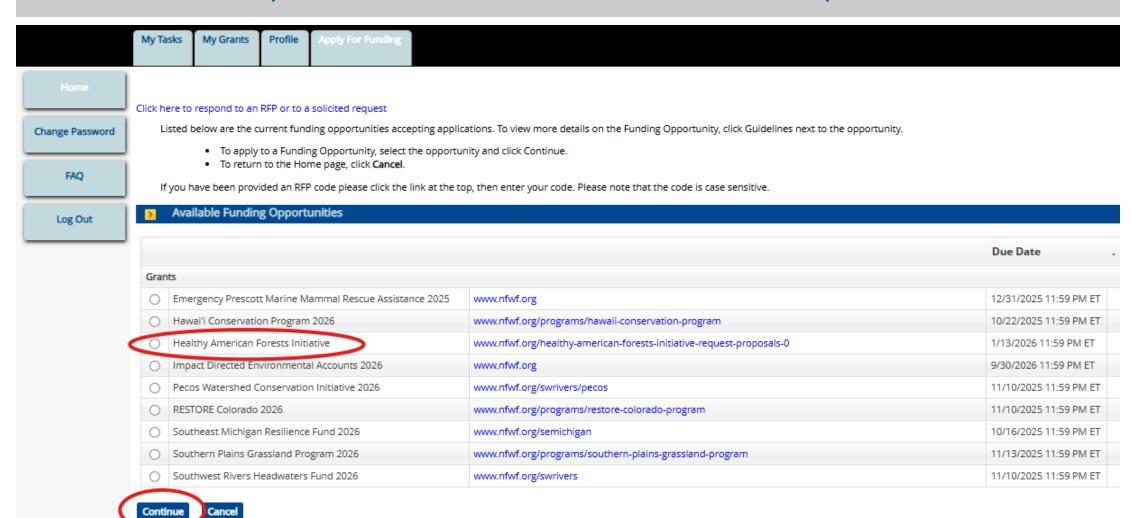
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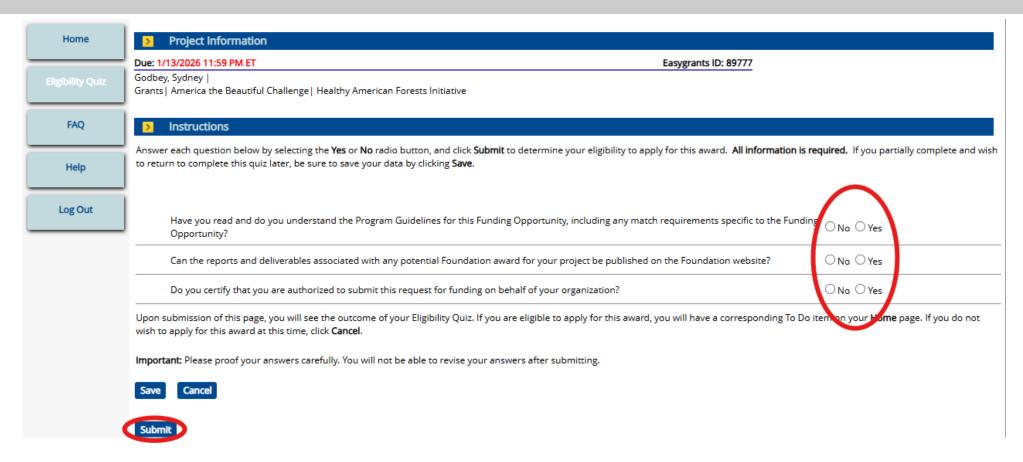
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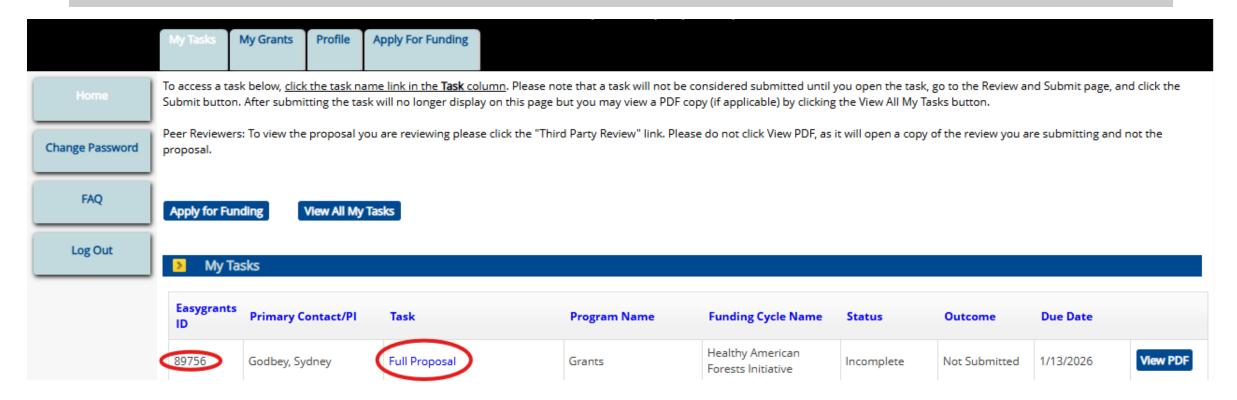
Step Two Continued: Locate the Proposal



Step Three: Eligibility Quiz



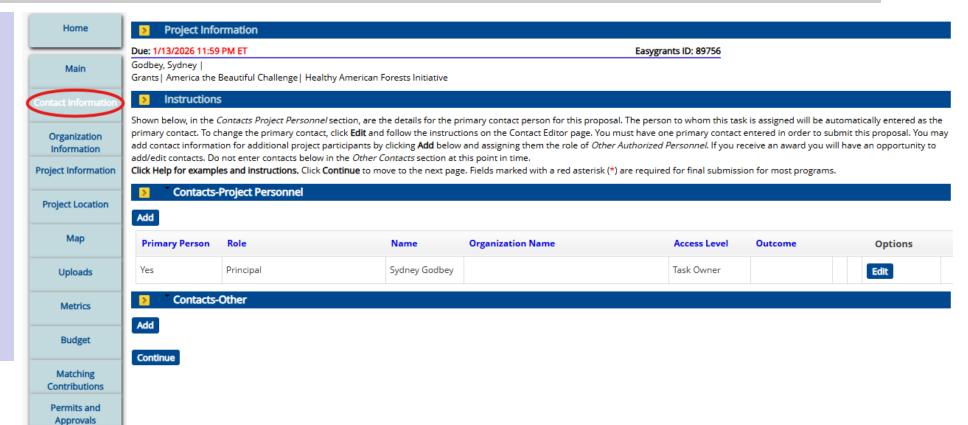
Step Four: Selecting the Proposal Task



Step Five: Contact Information

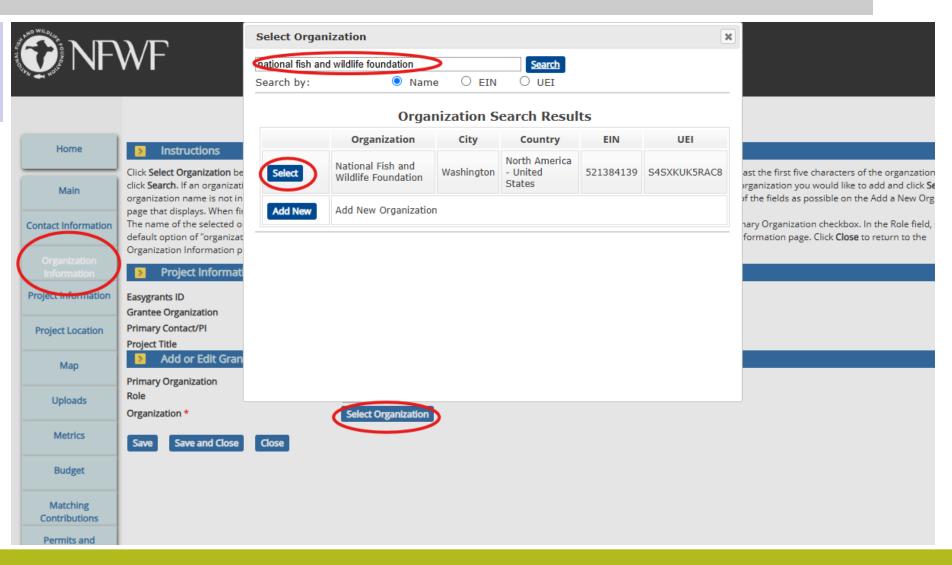
- This contact should be the individual most involved with this project as they will be the one who completes the rest of the proposal and receives communication about the submission. This must be someone who is from the primary applicant organization.
- If awarded, you will be able to assign tasks (financial reporting, programmatic reporting, etc.) to specific individuals within your organization

Review and Submit



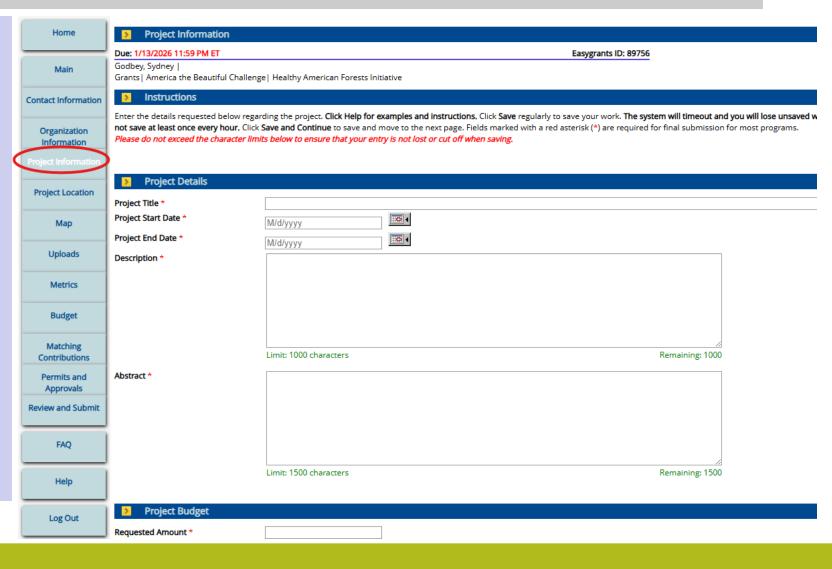
Step Six: Organization Information

The organization section is <u>only</u> for the primary applicant. Please enter information for an eligible organization.



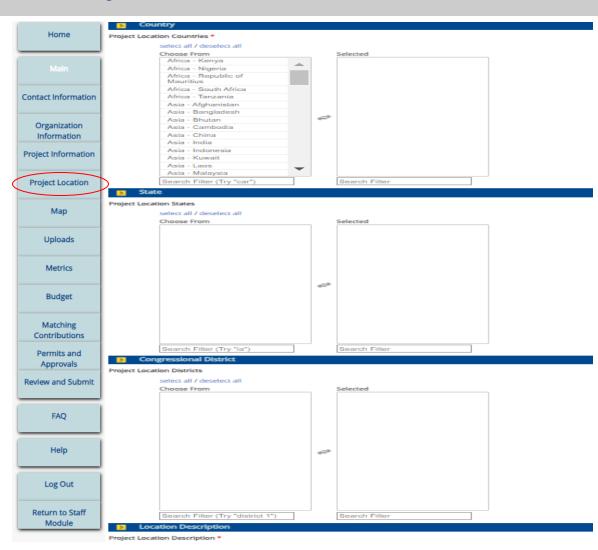
Step Seven: Project Information

- Project Title should be short, descriptive, distinguish it from other proposals, and indicate the purpose.
- Project Dates should begin within five months of the award announcement date, no longer than 2 years.
- Description Two sentences. The first sentence should state the activity/method being used to address a specific species/habitat and location. The second should state the expected outcome and relevance to conservation.
- Abstract Three to four sentences, derived from the project description. Provide a more detailed description; including location, purpose, major activities, target species, habitat(s), outcomes and partners.
- Requested Amount This must match your budget



Step Eight: Project Location

- **Project Location Country:** All projects must occur within National Forest Systems (NFS) land.
- Project Location State/Province: Select all states that apply.
 Projects throughout the U.S., U.S. territories, and Tribal
 Nations are eligible for funding.
- Project Location U.S. Congressional District(s): Congressional District lines are periodically redrawn in many states. Please carefully review the district(s) for your project's location. If you are not sure what the Congressional District(s) should be, you can enter the project zip codes or addresses at http://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/map to determine the correct district(s) for your project. If your project takes place statewide, please select the "All Districts" option for that state.
- Project Location Description: Please include the state and county/city where the project will occur. Include the name of the National Forest or National Grassland. (300 character limit, including spaces).



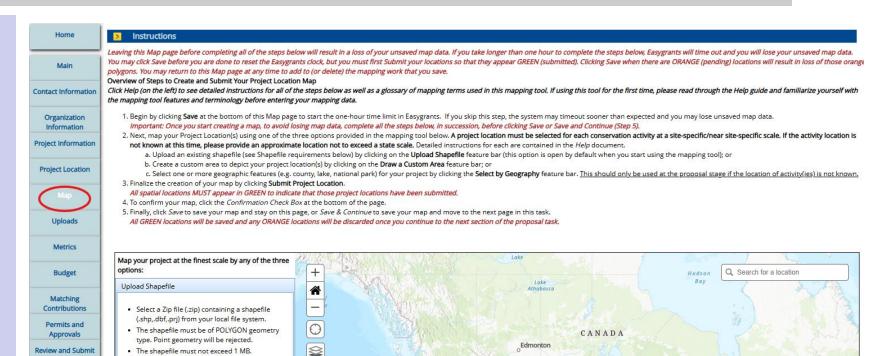
Step Nine: Map

Choose File No file chosen

FAO

Log Out

- Follow the instructions at the top of the page.
- Navigate to the map window and click "Save" at the bottom of the page to begin mapping your project.
- There are three methods of submitting the location(s) of your project:
 - I. Upload a Shapefile
 - II. Select by Geography
 - III. Draw a Custom Area
- Once your location(s) have been created, click "Submit Project Location".
- To finalize your location, click the "Confirmation" check box at the bottom of the page.
- Then click "Save" (or "Save & Continue") to save your map and move to the next task.



Great Plains

Step Ten: Uploads

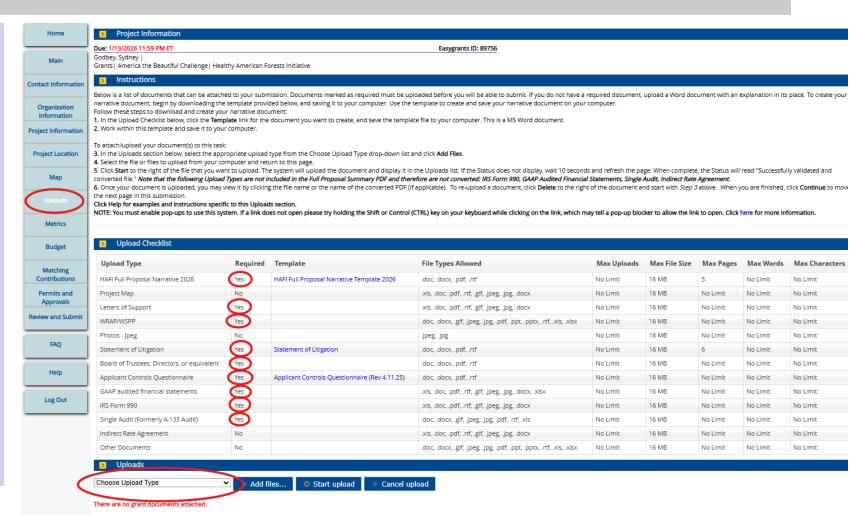
Continue

Required uploads:

- Pre-Proposal Narrative Template
- WRAP or WSPP
- Letter of Support from National Forest unit
- Single Audit
- GAAP Audit
- IRS Form 990 (not required for state, local, or tribal governments)
- Applicant Controls Questionnaire
- Statement of Litigation (not required for state, local, or tribal governments)
- Board of Trustees, Directors, or Equivalent

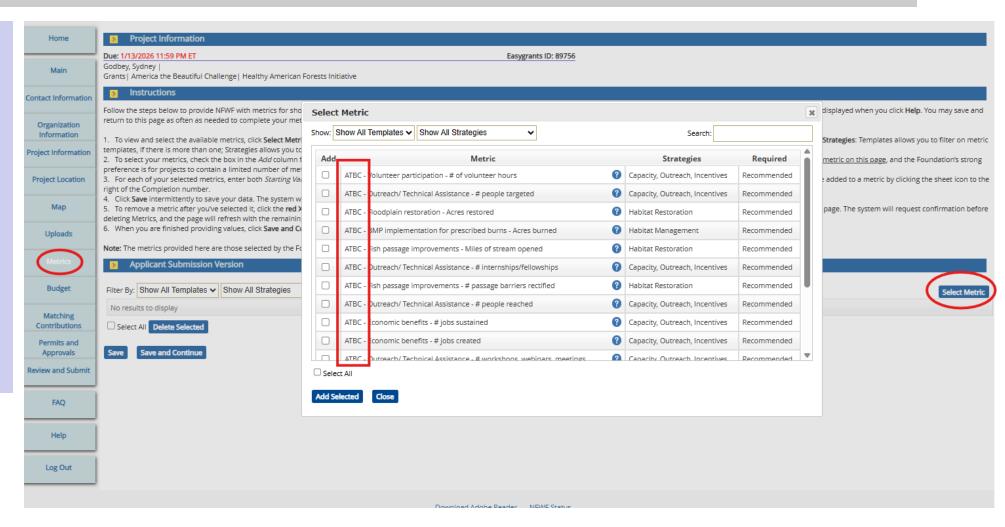
Optional Uploads

- Other Documents
- Additional Letters of Support
- Photos
- NICRA



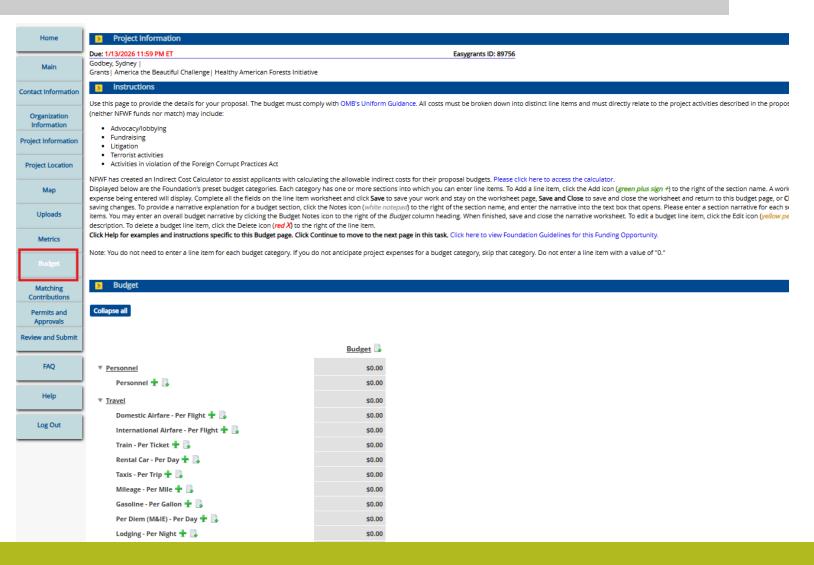
Step Eleven: Metrics

- Only add metrics for activities that will be completed within the start and end date of the project
- Starting values should almost always be ZERO
- Include a brief note for each metric to provide reviewers with more detail
- If awarded, progress will need to be tracked, so avoid including too many metrics



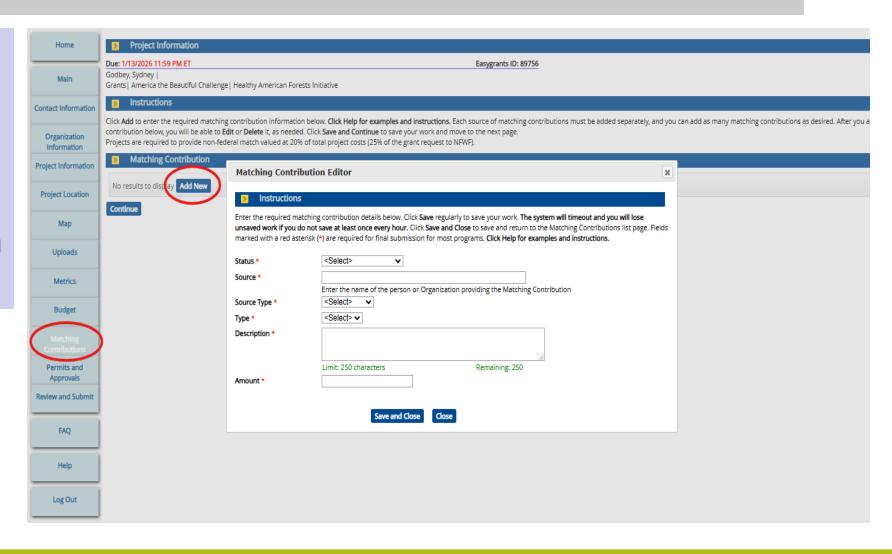
Step Twelve: Budget

- There are two main components to editing the budget - the expenses and the narratives
- To add an expense, click the green plus button then enter the basic information.
- To add a narrative, click the paper icon next to the green plus
- Please follow each step carefully and input all required information. We highly recommend viewing "Detailed Budget and Narrative Guide" on the NFWF website.



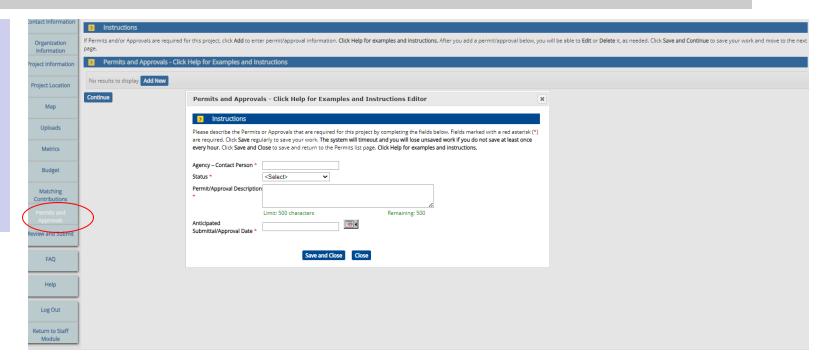
Step Thirteen: Matching Contributions

- When on the match page, click the "Add" button to add sources of matching contributions and list each source separately in the space provided. Match consists of the portion of project costs not paid with NFWF funds and may be in the form of cash, in-kind or volunteer contributions.
- Projects are required to provide non-federal match valued at 20% of total project costs (25% of the grant request to NFWF).



Step Fourteen: Permits and Approvals

- When on the permit and approvals page, click the "Add" button to add any regulatory compliance or permitting that you have completed or started to work through.
- Projects are required to receive NEPA approval before moving forward. Demonstrating this awareness through any progress on this section is not required, but viewed positively.



Step Fifteen: Review and Submit

- To submit, each section of your proposal should be indicated "Complete" with a green check mark in the "Status" column. If any section is indicated "Incomplete" with a red X, you will not be able to submit and must go back and check your work. Once all sections are complete and have the green check mark in the status column, a 'submit' button will be available. Once you've submitted, the task will disappear from your home page.
- To view and save your proposal you may click on the "View PDF" button. Please note that some of the financial documentation will be excluded from the composite file, but will be received by NFWF upon submission. After submission, you will receive a confirmation email from Easygrants@nfwf.org

