



Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund 2026 RFP Full Proposal Tip Sheet

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Summary

- Program Name: Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF)
- Geographic Focus: Delaware River Watershed (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland)
- Full Proposal Due Date: Thursday, March 26th, 2026, by 11:59 PM EST
- Awards will range from \$75,000 to \$1,500,000
- Total Funding Available: Contingent on program appropriations
- Matching contributions are encouraged but not required for this funding opportunity. Projects that offer 1:1 match from Non-Federal sources will be more competitive.
- Proposals must address one of four [Strategic Program Areas](#):
 - Sustain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat
 - Improve and maintain water quality
 - Sustain and enhance water management
 - Improve outdoor recreational opportunities
- Eligible Applicants: non-profit 501(c) organizations; federal, state, interstate, local and municipal governments, Tribal governments and organizations, and educational institutions
- Applications will be submitted through [Easygrants](#), which works best in Google Chrome

Program Contacts

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Quick Links

- [2026 Request for Proposals](#)
- [Metrics Guidance](#)
- [DWCF Priority Species](#)
- DWCF Toolbox (available at the RFP webpage [here](#))

Applying for a DWCF Grant

The following information will take you through each section of the Easygrants application in the order that it will appear, but you may complete these sections and fields in any order.

When you are ready to begin the application process, go to easygrants.nfwf.org.

- New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting their application.
- Existing users should log in using their e-mail address and password. If you have forgotten your password, please click the “Forgot your password?” link on the Easygrants login page and a reset link will be sent to you. The link expires within 24 hours of being sent.
- Once you are logged in, click the **Apply for Funding** button, and select Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund 2026 from the list of “Available Funding Opportunities”.
- Complete the Eligibility Quiz and Save and Submit your response.
- If you pass the Eligibility Quiz, Easygrants will return you to your personal Easygrants Home Page. From there, click on the Full-Proposal for the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund 2026. Now you are ready to get started! If you do not pass the Eligibility Quiz, please contact [Ragan Smith](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Enter the contact information for the primary person responsible for completing the Easygrants application (this person is tagged as the Principal). The primary contact on the application **must** be employed at the applicant organization, contractors may not apply on behalf of an organization. Additional personnel may be added to your Easygrants account by clicking the “Add” button and entering their information (tag as a Collaborator).

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Use the “Select Organization” button to search for your organization; you can search by Name, EIN number, or DUNS number. When searching by Name, it is recommended that you enter as few words as possible to ensure your return list is comprehensive. Select your organization from the list that is the most complete (has DUNS and/or EIN numbers). If Easygrants informs you that your organization’s EIN or DUNS already exists but you are unable to find your organization, please contact [Ragan Smith](#) for support (include your organization’s name, EIN, DUNS). 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

- **Project Title:** Provide a short, descriptive name that will distinguish it from other proposals and indicate project purpose. If location is not already indicated in the Project Title, then include a two-letter state abbreviation for **each** state in parentheses. (100 character limit, including spaces)

Example: Connecting Rivers and Community: Brook Trout Restoration in the Upper Delaware River (NY)

- **Project Start Date:** Projects should begin within six months of the award announcement date. A project cannot have a start date prior to July 1, 2026.
- **Project End Date:** Projects should be completed within three (3) years of the project start date. A project cannot have an end date after December 31, 2029.
- **Description:** Should be two sentences long in most cases. The first sentence should clearly state the main activity/method being used to address a specific species/habitat and location. The second sentence should state the expected outcome from the investment and relevance to conservation. Please refrain from using pronouns such as I, we, our, etc. (500 character limit, including spaces)

Example: Support implementation of nature-based solutions for brook trout passage and habitat restoration in the East Branch Delaware River. Project will reconnect 9.5 miles of stream and complete designs for future restoration and reconnection projects, continuing momentum for native trout recovery in the watershed.

- **Abstract:** Provide a more detailed description of your project; including location, purpose, major activities, target species, specific habitat, outcomes (deliverables at the end of the grant period) and partners. If this is an international project (or if work is to be completed outside of the US or US territories), please provide one or two sentences explaining the importance/connection to the U.S. Please refrain from using pronouns such as I, we, our, etc. (1500 character limit, including spaces)

Example: Sustaining, enhancing, and reconnecting brook trout habitat in the Upper Delaware River through community driven infrastructure improvement projects will lead to protection of native eastern brook trout and coldwater habitat, enhancing trout fishing opportunities and ensuring public safety and community resiliency. Trout Unlimited will support implementation of priority nature-based solutions for brook trout passage and habitat restoration in the East Branch Delaware River and Willowemoc Creek. Project will reconnect 9.5 miles of stream and complete designs for future restoration and reconnection projects, continuing momentum for native trout recovery in the watershed.

- **Requested Amount:** Grant requests should be between \$75,000 and \$1,500,000 for Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund applications (please review the Request for Proposal for categories of funding).

PROJECT LOCATION

- **Project Location Country:** All projects must occur within “North America – United States”.
- **Project Location State/Province:** Select all states that apply. New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware and a small portion of Maryland.
- **Project Location U.S. Congressional District(s):** 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 <https://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 county/city where the project will occur in your description. (200 character limit, including spaces)

Example: Delaware County and Sullivan County, New York

MAP

This section allows you to map the location(s) of your proposed project. Follow the page instructions provided in Easygrants. For more detailed assistance, refer to the [Map Page Help](#) document or [Mapping Video Tutorial](#).

- 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.

Tip: Save frequently! This part of the application does time out, so be sure to save your work.

UPLOADS

To complete your application, you must upload one or more files into Easygrants. In general, please minimize the file size of your uploads, and especially files that include photos, diagrams or logos. There is a file size limit of 15 megabytes.

- **Full Proposal Narrative:** The most important upload is your actual full proposal narrative. The **full proposal narrative template** may be downloaded from Easygrants at any time and completed at your leisure. It must be uploaded back into your Easygrants application before your application may be submitted. The narrative may not exceed ten (10) pages in total length.
- In addition to the narrative, several other files should be uploaded. Following is guidance regarding all required and optional uploads:

Upload	Required	Notes
Narrative	Yes	Template provided in Easygrants online application “Uploads” section.
Project Maps	No	In addition to the Mapping Tool, please submit maps and/or diagrams of on-site work proposed, if applicable. Strongly recommended for restoration or green infrastructure projects.
Letters of Support**	Highly recommended	Recommended from significant partners, especially those providing matching contributions. Letters of support should not be mailed directly to NFWF. Scan all letters of support into one single file and upload the file in the “Uploads” section of your online application.
Other documents	No	Ten (10) page limit.

Statement of Litigation	Yes	Template provided in Easygrants online application “Uploads” section. Federal, state, and local government applicants are not required to complete this section.
Board of Trustees or Directors	Yes	Provide a list of members. If your organization is not a nonprofit and does not have a Board, upload a document stating that none exists.
GAAP Audited Financial Statements*	Yes	Please refer to the Required Financial Documents and FAQs webpage for details on all financial information required for submission.
IRS Form 990*	Yes	Please refer to the Required Financial Documents and FAQs webpage for details on all financial information required for submission.
Single Audit*	Yes	Please refer to the Required Financial Documents and FAQs webpage for details on all financial information required for submission.
Applicant Controls Questionnaire	Yes	Please refer to the Required Financial Documents and FAQs webpage for details on all financial information required for submission.
Conceptual or Engineered Plans	No	Conceptual or engineering designs of green infrastructure, restoration, best management practices, and other technology or techniques that will be employed during the project, if applicable.
Photos	No	Please compress photos to minimize file size. 3 photos maximum.

*If your organization has recently applied to NFWF for a grant and valid information is already on file in Easygrants and is current, you will not be asked for these uploads and these categories will not appear for you in Easygrants. Also, please note that financial documents may not show a ‘successfully converted’ status when you are uploading them. This is because financial documents are not pulled into the full proposal PDF but are stored in a separate part of the easygrants system which can only be accessed by NFWF staff once uploaded.

****Letters of Support:**

While letters of support are not a required upload in Easygrants, they are highly encouraged. Letters from key partners and those providing in-kind or cash match for the project are essential for communicating project strength. Please see the [Letters of Support Best Practices](#) guidance for additional information and examples/templates.

METRICS

This section allows you to select the activity and outcome metrics you will use to measure your project’s progress and success. Follow the directions provided in Easygrants to complete this section. A couple of pointers:

- A list of metrics associated with this program will be presented.
- Hover your mouse cursor over the “?” next to a metric to read its description and specific guidance.
- Please “Add” and complete at least one metric relevant to reporting your project’s progress.
- For each metric you will need to provide values for “Starting Value” and “Target Value”. The starting value should be zero (0), even for additional phases of previously funded work.
- In your project narrative, you will have the opportunity to describe additional activities and outcomes associated with your project.
- Please only select metrics associated with the project elements for which you are requesting funding in this grant.

Additional guidance on specific metrics and common mistakes is available in the [Delaware River Program 2026 Metrics Guide](#).

To assist applicants in generating credible metric estimates, NFWF has partnered with The Commons to functionalize [FieldDoc](#), a user-friendly tool that allows consistent planning, tracking, and reporting of water quality improvement activities and associated nutrient and sediment load reductions from proposed grant projects.

Upon grant award, NFWF will work closely with all funded projects to accurately track and report project activities in FieldDoc. For technical support on FieldDoc utilization during the proposal development process, please contact support@fielddoc.org. Additional guidance is available at help.fielddoc.org.

BUDGET

Please refer to the [Detailed Budget Instructions](#) sheet in order to accurately complete a budget for this project.

- Budgets without narrative descriptions may be rejected and/or returned to the applicant for further details and clarification.
- Narratives should be written in such a way that someone not specifically familiar with the project can conceptually understand the rationale, purpose and calculation of the anticipated costs identified.
- The “Requested Amount” in the Project Information section must match your budget grand total exactly. The budget should only represent the grant amount being requested from NFWF; it should not include matching funds or represent the overall budget for the project.
- NFWF reserves the right to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of a budget, which may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs in the proposed budget.

Indirect Costs: If you intend to include indirect costs in your budget, please review NFWF’s [Indirect Cost Policy](#).

- The federal government has determined that a *de minimis* 15% indirect rate is an acceptable minimum for organizations without a NICRA. As such, NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize **ALL** proposals with indirect rates above 15% for cost-effectiveness.
- If you are including indirect costs in your budget request, please provide a narrative description identifying what the indirect request will be supporting (e.g., CEO salary, rent for lab space central to project site, etc.).
- Indirect cost narratives should include a statement of whether the applicant has ever had a NICRA. If the applicant has a NICRA, it shall include supporting documentation.
- Budgets without narrative descriptions for indirect costs may be rejected and/or returned to the applicant for further details and clarification.

MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

Matching contributions are encouraged but not required for this funding opportunity. However, the amount of matching funds offered is one criterion considered during the review process, and projects that offer match from Non-Federal sources will be more competitive. To provide match flexibility, NFWF and FWS will allow applicants to utilize non-federal match generated from January 1, 2025 through present. Match must be spent between January 1, 2025, and the proposed project end date, non-Federal in origin and complementary to the proposed work.

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. Match must meet all of the following criteria:

Non-federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee’s records
- Not included as contributions for any other Federal award

- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Committed directly to the project and expended between January 1, 2025 and the proposed end date
- Allowable under OMB 2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

Federal Matching Contributions*:

- Verifiable from the grantee's records
- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Committed directly to the project and used between January 1, 2025 and the proposed end date

** Applicants are encouraged to include federal contributions to demonstrate the full scope and support of the project.*

PERMITS and APPROVALS

If permits and/or approvals are required for this project, click the "Add" button to provide details for each permit and/or approval. Include extra information in the description section as necessary (e.g., pre-permit meeting held on Jan. 1, 2026, etc.).

REVIEW and SUBMIT

When you are ready 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 (✗), you will not be able to submit and must go back and check your work in each section that is "Incomplete". The Validation Status section in the Review and Submit section of the application explains why the system indicates a section is "Incomplete".

To view and save your proposal you may click on the "View PDF" button. This function creates a composite file with all of the fields and substantive uploads, which you may then save as a stand-alone document. Please note that some of the financial documentation will be excluded from the composite file but will be received by NFWF upon submission. Once you have reviewed your proposal for accuracy, click the "Submit" button to officially submit your proposal. **Upon submission, you will receive a confirmation email from Easygrants@nfwf.org.**

Tip: some sections of the proposal task will show as "Complete" with a green check mark even before data has been entered (for example, the budget section). Please ensure ALL sections of the proposal are complete before hitting Submit!

Using Easygrants

1. How do I get back into the Easygrants online system when locked out?

Please send an email to [Ragan Smith](mailto:Ragan.Smith@nfwf.org) with your name, easygrants ID #, e-mail address, and a description of the issue.

2. I forgot my Easygrants password. How do I get this information sent to me?

Please go to easygrants.nfwf.org, click the "Forgot your password?" link, enter your e-mail address as the Login ID, and click Submit. Easygrants will e-mail you a copy of your login information. Please note that the reset password link expires after 24 hours of being sent.

3. I have finished my proposal, and it is not showing up as completed.

Please remember to hit the “submit” button in the Review and Submit section of the application when you have completed the application. When a task is properly submitted in easygrants the task will no longer be visible on the user’s homepage.

4. How will I know when NFWF has received my completed application?

You will receive an automated notification from Easygrants@nfwf.org.

5. I completed the application, and it will not submit. Why not?

If you are unable to submit your application, go to the Review and Submit form in the application. If any section is indicated “Incomplete” with a red (X), there will also be an explanation as to why the system indicates the section is “Incomplete”. You must go back and check your work in each section that is “Incomplete”. Below are two examples that frequently prevent submission:

- 1) Check the Project Information section of the Easygrants online application “Requested Amount” to see if it matches your budget grand total. The amounts must match **exactly** (down to the cent) for you to be able to submit a proposal. Please edit your Requested Amount and/or budget if needed.
- 2) Do not complete sections of the budget where you have no costs. If you entered “0” for any budget line items, delete those line items. Placing a “0” in these line items will prevent you from submitting a proposal.

6. What should I do if a page crashes in Easygrants?

If you receive a System Encountered Error it is important to follow the instructions on the page

- 1) First, click **Resume** and you should return to the previous page. Check if the action you tried to complete occurred. If the action did not complete, make a note of what page you are on and what button or link you are clicking.
- 2) Retry the action. If the system crashes again you must click the **Send an E-mail** to report the issue. This will open a Send Error Message E-mail page in a new window or tab. **Do not skip these steps and e-mail Easygrants Helpdesk yourself; we need the information in this e-mail to resolve your issue.**
- 3) In the email to Easygrants Helpdesk, please enter your name, easygrants ID #, e-mail address, phone number, and a description of what happened. The description needs to include what page you were on, what data you may have typed into the page, what button/link you clicked, and what you were trying to do.
- 4) Click **Submit** to send the message and report the error. This will be sent to the NFWF Easygrants Helpdesk along with additional technical information sent by Easygrants.

7. I need to download a copy of my submitted proposal.

To download a copy of your proposal after submitting please go to your Home screen, click the **View All Tasks** button, and find your proposal in the list of tasks. Click **View PDF** to download a copy of your proposal. If the PDF does not open or begin downloading please try again, holding the Shift or Control (CTRL) key on your keyboard to override your pop-up blocker. Please note that proposals are only available for a limited time after a cycle closes.

For Easygrants technical support please contact [Ragan Smith](mailto:Ragan.Smith@nfwf.org) or our Helpdesk at Easygrants@nfwf.org or leave a message at 202-595-2497. Please include your name, easygrants ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue. Helpdesk hours are 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM EST, Mon-Fri.

FREQUENTLY ASKED DWCF QUESTIONS

General Questions

1. Where do I go for more information on the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund?

For general information about the DWCF, we encourage you to review the Request for Proposals, tip sheets, webinar recording, and other materials on our website: www.nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program.

2. What is the DWCF, is it an annual grant competition?

The Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund was created by Congress through the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act. Since 2018, NFWF has been administering the DWCF in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife service as an annual grant competition, subject to Congressional appropriations and the availability of funds.

3. Where can I find examples of previously funded DWCF projects?

Descriptions of previously funded DWCF projects can be found on our website in the Grant Slate announcements for each funding cycle on the 'Program Information' tab of the Delaware River Program webpage:

www.nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program

Webinar Recording

1. Will a recording of the applicant webinar be made available?

Yes, the recording will be available at www.nfwf.org/delaware-watershed-conservation-fund-2026-request-proposals under "Related Content".

2. Will the slides be available?

The slides will be available along with the recorded webinar at

www.nfwf.org/delaware-watershed-conservation-fund-2026-request-proposals.

Match Questions

1. What are the match requirements and conditions for 2026 DWCF proposals?

In 2026, matching contributions are encouraged but not required for this funding opportunity. However, the amount of matching funds offered is one criterion considered during the review process, and projects that offer match from Non-Federal sources will be more competitive. To provide match flexibility, NFWF and FWS will allow applicants to utilize non-federal match generated from January 1, 2025, through present. Match must be spent between January 1, 2025, and the proposed project end date, non-Federal in origin and complementary to the proposed work.

2. What is the earliest date match can be incurred and count towards a project?

For 2026, it is the intention of NFWF and our DWCF funders at the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service that applicants are allowed to have a match look back period (prior to the start of project activities NFWF funding is requested for) that begins on January 1, 2025, assuming all other match conditions are met. This policy is pending and subject to change as our cooperative agreement with U.S. FWS has not yet been executed, but we anticipate being able to provide this match flexibility.

3. Does DWCF accept in-kind match?

DWCF accepts both cash and in-kind match. Please note in-kind and cash match are equally competitive.

4. How can I capture federal funds leveraged in support of a project, when they do not count as non-federal match?

In the match section of your application, you can indicate that funds are federal. You can also detail federal funds leveraged in support of your project in your proposal narrative. These funds will be counted as federal leverage but not as match when evaluating your proposal.

Period of Performance

1. What is the Period of Performance?

The Period of Performance is the time between the start and end date of your project for which all activities in the scope of work and requested budget must be included. Expenses incurred outside of the start and end dates cannot be reimbursed. With the ability for applicants look back and include match incurred between January 1, 2025, and the proposed end date, the project period of performance should have a start date aligned with the start of project activities included in the NFWF funding request. This means match may be raised and spent prior to the project start date (though no earlier than January 1, 2025) but no later than the project end date.

2. What is the greatest possible period of performance?

Projects must be ready to begin within six months of the grant award and be completed within three years of award. It is up to the applicant to specify the period of performance for their project that is appropriate for the work they are proposing to complete. For this funding opportunity, a project cannot have a start date prior to July 1, 2026, or an end date after December 31, 2029. Any expenses incurred prior to an official award letter and signed contract are taken solely at the risk of the applicant.

3. When will funds be available?

This will depend on how complete your application is, the grant policies and routing at your organization, and how responsive you are to modification requests. Funds are only disbursed to grantees who have a signed grant agreement with NFWF. Award notifications are expected in August 2026.