TOOLBOX

for preparing proposals to the

DELAWARE WATERSHED CONSERVATION FUND

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NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

NFWF

INTRO TO NFWF'S DELAWARE WATERSHED CONSERVATION FUND

DELAWARE WATERSHED CONSERVATION FUND

The Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund (DWCF) addresses near-term and long-range issues identified by the Delaware River Basin Restoration Partnership and Program Framework, for measurable gains for fish and wildlife conservation, clean water, access to outdoor recreation, and other values and natural and economic benefits for people living in the basin. Major funding for the DWCF is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The fund was launched in 2018 as a first step toward delivering the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act, bringing together various stakeholders invested in restoration and conservation efforts throughout the Delaware River Watershed to address different strategic program areas and cross-program activities, build networks, and improve efficiency and focus on a basin-wide scale. DWCF projects are implemented entirely within the Delaware River watershed. The fund's investments target areas of regional significance for restoration and conservation to support ongoing efforts, increase capacity, and facilitate maximum adaptive potential in changing watershed conditions.

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TOOLS FOR A ROBUST PROPOSAL

DWCF PROPOSAL BEST PRACTICES

FieldDoc: https://www.fielddoc.org/

To assist applicants in generating credible and spatially explicit metric estimates, NFWF has partnered with the Commons to functionalize FieldDoc, a user-friendly tool that allows consistent planning, tracking, and reporting of conservation activities and modeling of associated nutrient and sediment load reductions from proposed grant projects. In 2026, DWCF applicants are not required to enter their proposed projects into FieldDoc at the time of application. Rather, the tool should to serve as a resource available to applicants. For technical support on FieldDoc utilization during the proposal development process, please contact support@fielddoc.org. Additional guidance is available at help.fielddoc.org.

Metrics Guidance: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2026-01/dwcf-2026-metrics-guidance.pdf

To increase consistency in the usage and calculations of metrics, the NFWF Delaware team has created a "2026 Metrics Guidance" document to provide additional details and instructions about each metric. Please ensure that, upon choosing a metric to include in your proposal, the calculation of the target value accounts for the details listed for the metric in the guide.

Letters of Support Best Practices: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2026-01/dwcf-2026-los-best-practices.pdf

Delaware River Program RFP Tip Sheet: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2026-01/dwcf-2026-tip-sheet.pdf

NFWF GENERAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Applicant Information: https://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx

Indirect Cost Policy: https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/indirect-cost-policy

Indirect Cost Calculator: https://www.nfwf.org/grants/application-information/indirect-cost-calculator

Required Financial Documents: https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/required-financial-documents

PERMITTING AND COMPLIANCE

Fish and Wildlife Service NEPA Reference Handbook: https://www.fws.gov/node/265335#nepa

Projects selected will be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to DWCF projects initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Reimbursement for project activities may be delayed until compliance requirements are complete. Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals.

DWCF NEPA/NHPA/ESA Guidance Materials: https://nfwf.sharefile.com/i/i732aa81ea1b44e89

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TOOLS FOR ESTABLISHING OUTCOMES

WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS, ASSESSMENTS, AND BMPS

DOI Nature-based Solutions Roadmap: https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/doi-nbs-roadmap.pdf

The purpose of the Department of the Interior Nature Based Solutions Roadmap is to provide consistent and credible information about nature-based solutions, such as which strategies match certain conditions and goals, what co-benefits they are likely to provide, example projects, and additional resources for project planning, construction, and monitoring.

Pollutant Load Estimation Tool (PLET): https://www.epa.gov/nps/plet

PLET employs simple algorithms to calculate nutrient and sediment loads from different land uses and the load reductions that would result from the implementation of various best management practices (BMPs). PLET provides a user-friendly Visual Basic (VB) interface to create a customized spreadsheet-based model in Microsoft (MS) Excel. PLET has recently replaced the Spreadsheet Tool for Estimating Pollutant Loads (STEPL) and uses the same underlying formulas with a more user-friendly interface.

Model My Watershed: https://wikiwatershed.org/model/

Model My Watershed is a watershed-modeling web app that enables citizens, conservation practitioners, municipal decision-makers, educators, and students to: analyze real land use and soil data in their neighborhoods and watersheds; model stormwater runoff and water-quality impacts using professional-grade models; and compare how different conservation or development scenarios could modify runoff and water quality.

CBP Expert Panels and Products: https://www.chesapeakebay.net/who/group/bmp_expert_panels

The Chesapeake Bay Program utilizes expert panels to establish BMP efficiencies and loading estimates for incorporating restoration and conservation actions into Chesapeake water quality goals. While many of those products and analyses are tied to CB models and physiographic regions, their approaches and estimates can be useful in informing loading calculations and practice effectiveness for the Delaware watershed. This one is particularly comprehensive:

- Chesapeake Bay Program Quick Reference Guide for Best Management Practices (BMPs): Nonpoint Source BMPs to Reduce Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment Loads to the Chesapeake Bay and its Local Waters - https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/BMP-Guide_Full.pdf

Coastal Resilience and Evaluation Siting Tool (CREST): https://resilientcoasts.org/#Home

CREST uses regional coastal resilience assessments seek to identify areas where natural resource restoration efforts will have the greatest impact for human community resilience, as well as for fish and wildlife, and identifies these types of natural areas as Resilience Hubs. For more information about NFWF's regional coastal assessment https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/coastalresilience/Documents/coastal-resilience-assessment-fact-sheet.pdf.

SPECIES AND HABITAT

DWCF Interactive Mapper:
https://geo.nfwf.org/portal/apps/experiencebuilder/experience/?id=75194ba5df80405490d310617c0707d3

NFWF developed an interactive mapping tool for applicants to assist in geographic prioritization during proposal development. GIS focal layers are available for different DWCF priority species, including data from the Delaware River Program Business Plan and Nature's Network.

Delaware River Watershed Business Plan: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2023-01/delaware-river-watershed-business-plan-20230123.pdf

In 2017, the Board of Directors of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation approved NFWF's Delaware River Watershed Business Plan. The plan was developed with the input of a broad range of Delaware River Watershed

stakeholders, experts, and practitioners—and included an in-depth geospatial analysis performed by the Trust for Public Lands. The plan outlines the species, goals, strategies, and activities that will provide the biggest return on investment in the Delaware River Watershed. In 2023, NFWF completed a refresh of the Business Plan and some of its goals.

NatureServe Explorer: http://explorer.natureserve.org/

NatureServe Explorer is an authoritative source for information on more than 70,000 plants, animals, and ecosystems of the United States and Canada. Explorer includes particularly in-depth coverage for rare and endangered species. Perform searches by Species and/or Ecological Communities & Systems by Name, Taxonomy, Location, or Conservation Status. Use the database to easily find scientific and common names, conservation status, distribution maps, images, life histories, conservation needs, and more.

NatureServe National Species Dataset: https://www.natureserve.org/products/national-species-dataset

NatureServe's foundational at-risk species dataset includes more than 900,000 location records (element occurrences) from our Network of biological inventories operating in all 50 states and in most of Canada. Over four decades, this network has collected and managed detailed local information on plants and animals of conservation concern. Representing the best available information on the known location, viability, and other information on at-risk species populations, this dataset is essential to regional and local analyses, decision-making, and planning.

**This toolbox is not intended to be exhaustive, guarantee accuracy in estimating outcomes, or endorse the use of any tools over others. These resources should help provide contextual information for proposals. NFWF will update this document regularly as resources become available or are updated. If you have tools and resources you would like to suggest for the toolbox, please feel free to send them to erin.lewis@nfwf.org (updated January 2026).*