Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grants Program

Request for Proposals
Proposal Due Date: Friday, January 31, 2014

On behalf of the Department of the Interior, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is pleased to announce the Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grant Program which will support projects that reduce communities' vulnerability to the growing risks from coastal storms, sea level rise, flooding, erosion and associated threats through strengthening natural ecosystems that also benefit fish and wildlife.

The Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grants Program will award more than $100 million in grants throughout the region affected by Hurricane Sandy including Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and West Virginia—the states that officially declared a natural disaster as a result of the storm event. Grants will be awarded to projects that assess, restore, enhance or create wetlands, beaches and other natural systems to help better protect communities and to mitigate the impacts of future storms and naturally occurring events on fish and wildlife species and habitats.

Program implementation is being closely coordinated with several Department of the Interior (DOI) bureaus including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Program Sponsors

More than $100 million in funding is being provided by DOI to support the Competitive Grants Program. These funds are focused on rebuilding, restoring and researching natural defense systems in states that declared a natural disaster as a result of Hurricane Sandy.

In addition, NFWF received $2.6 million from a court-ordered community service payment out of the District Courts of Delaware and New Jersey. The funds will be used for projects that will help to conserve, preserve, or restore the coastal environment of New Jersey and Delaware, specifically the areas affected by Hurricane Sandy.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Project Planning and Design. Recognizing that more technically complicated restoration and protection projects often require a phase of planning, design and permitting, applicants may request funding up to $250,000 to support this phase of project development for on-the-ground projects. Such funding may be used to support the preparation of conceptual designs, engineering plans, and detailed project budgets, to facilitate permitting processes, and to support other related tasks to position projects for successful implementation in the future. Projects that receive grants for planning and design may be eligible for funding in future grant cycles, to the extent they occur, to seek funding for project implementation.

While project design grants are not expected to achieve environmental or conservation outputs and outcomes, proposals should demonstrate that the resulting project plan, when implemented, will address program goals related to coastal resiliency and ecosystem enhancements. Proposals should explain how key stakeholders will be involved in the design process and provide assurance that the project implementation phase will be supported by key stakeholders (i.e., local or state regulatory agencies) once planning is completed.

Coastal Resiliency Assessments. DOI will invest in mapping, analysis, assessments, resiliency planning, and natural resource prioritizations that advance our knowledge of the effects of climate change, sea level rise, and storm events on coastal natural ecosystems and communities. The assessments should be designed to inform future management actions, policies and practices that can help natural resource managers and communities mitigate for the impacts of future storms and other naturally occurring events. Applicants should indicate how proposed assessments will complement existing assessments being conducted by DOI bureaus, existing partnerships including Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, and activity by other agencies and organizations. Grant funding of up to $1 million will be available for projects in this category.

Restoration and Resiliency Projects. Grant requests ranging from $250,000 to $5 million will be considered for projects that restore, enhance or create naturally functioning habitats or ecological systems for the benefit of communities and fish and wildlife species. Projects should demonstrate how they protect and enhance resiliency of natural systems and help to mitigate the impacts of future storms

LEVERAGING FEDERAL INVESTMENTS
Proposals that complement or leverage projects on federal lands that were funded through Department of the Interior's Sandy Supplemental Mitigation Funds are strongly encouraged. (Click here for information on that program and funded projects.) It is also encouraged that grantees leverage current funding, assessments or projects through other state and federal agencies such as USDA-NRCS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, DOT, EPA, NOAA, FEMA, HUD and others.

YOUTH AND VETERAN ENGAGEMENT.
Projects that include a significant role for youth and veterans are strongly encouraged. Participation of youth and veterans may include commitments such as employment opportunities or internships that are designed to educate and provide hands-on experiences that can aid youth and veterans in finding future employment in natural resource conservation, natural and cultural history and related fields. Opportunities to engage youth and veterans in volunteer activities associated with individual projects are also welcomed.

INNOVATION.
Implementation projects that include innovative technologies or techniques are encouraged. Planning projects that seek to integrate innovation into plans are ideal as well. Proposals for assessments are strongly encouraged to identify gaps in existing knowledge and propel the next generation of planning or projects.

and other naturally occurring events on communities, fish and wildlife. Projects should result in measureable and observable improvements to these systems.

Projects can be conducted on Federal, state or local government lands or private lands where there is a sufficient commitment to the protection of those lands for conservation purposes. However, given the goals of coastal resiliency, projects that consider the larger landscape and involve multiple landowners are encouraged.

Projects should describe the measurable outcomes (i.e. acres of wetlands and marsh created, miles of dunes and beaches replenished, miles of shoreline restored, number of communities integrating resiliency into future land use planning, etc.) anticipated through project implementation and highlight how these outcomes will enhance resiliency for the benefit of communities and fish and wildlife.

Furthermore, projects should support habitat and restoration goals of the Department of the Interior and its bureaus and complement state and local conservation priorities, including State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs), which are consistent with the goals of this program.

Finally, applicants should have a track record of project implementation success and the technical capacity to implement projects at a large scale. Applicants should also demonstrate strong partnerships with Federal, state and local agencies, existing regional partnerships such as Landscape Conservation Cooperatives as well as communities, non-profit organizations. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include a voluntary component that allows for citizens, students and others to participate.

Examples of restoration activities that are eligible for funding through this program include, but are not limited to:

- Sub-tidal Habitat
    - Build or restore oyster reefs
    - Replant submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV)

- Beaches and Dunes
    - Restore and enhance beach, bluff and/or dunes
    - Re-vegetate native plant communities
    - Rebuild and stabilize critical nesting islands
    - Install living shorelines
    - Rebuild lower beach habitat

- Wetlands and Marshes
    - Clear large debris and hazardous material from habitats, including wetlands
    - Plant or replant with native vegetation
    - Restore tidal hydrology
    - If appropriate install structures to protect against erosion and habitat loss

- Near-Coastal Freshwater Habitat
    - Assess and repair water control structures and pumps for managed wetlands and freshwater pond areas
    - Rebuild vernal pools and restore freshwater impoundments
    - Repair channels between estuaries and ponds allowing for freshwater return
    - Restore breached dikes

- Coastal Forests
    - Take reasonable measures to prevent against salt water intrusion
    - Plant or replant areas suitable for forest habitat with native species

- Inland Rivers and Streams
    - Riparian buffer restoration and creation
    - Stream restoration
    - Dam removal
    - Culvert replacement, upgrade or repair
    - Floodplain reconnection

Green Infrastructure. Projects using green infrastructure techniques and approaches that provide multiple ecosystem benefits and help to provide community resiliency will be considered for funding. These projects may include rebuilding natural systems in communities, such as wetlands, floodplains and forests, or applying green/"nature-based" stormwater management techniques including projects that infiltrate, capture and reuse stormwater to maintain or restore natural hydrology and prevent overflows and flooding. By establishing new or enhancing existing green infrastructure within or nearby communities, the impacts from future storms as well as sea level rise can be mitigated and wildlife and water quality can be enhanced. Grant requests ranging from $250,000 to $1 million will be considered.

Community Coastal Resiliency Planning. Projects that assist local governments and community organizations to integrate environmentally-sound solutions into comprehensive planning and zoning and into capital programs for parks, schools, transportation and community redevelopment will be considered for funding. Projects should demonstrate how local governments can integrate green infrastructure restoration, protection and maintenance into existing budgets and planning processes across multiple government departments (e.g., public works, parks and recreation, emergency management, education, transportation). Grant requests ranging from $100,000 to $500,000 will be considered and projects that involve multiple communities that are committed to the implementation of these planning exercises are encouraged.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed, evaluated and scored based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria:

- **Environmental and Community Benefits (65 points)** –Projects will increase community resiliency, such as reducing vulnerability to the growing risks from coastal storms, sea level rise, flooding, erosion and associated threats by strengthening natural ecosystems that also benefit fish and wildlife. Essentially, the ecological outcomes of any project should provide resiliency benefits for population centers or communities in proximity to the project. For example, projects should:

    - increase the resilience and capacity of ecosystems and infrastructure to withstand impacts of future storms;

    - address consequences of large-scale storms such as ecological and coastal change; flood and/or wind damage to built infrastructure; economic and commercial disruption; disruption of services

    - explain the importance of the project location to creating or enhancing coastal resiliency and why the proposed project or strategy is appropriate for addressing coastal resiliency needs in that location; describe how the project design was informed by sound science and practice; and explain how any

risks associated with the project will be mitigated in order to reduce any potential for negative impacts on resiliency.

- describe how the project benefits are substantial and measureable over a long-period of time, require minimal re-investment or operational costs after project completion, and account for projected changes in environmental stressors (e.g. climate change, sea level rise, land use/urbanization).

- leverage and amplify benefits of other proposed projects or ongoing resilience efforts, particularly those that complement recent investments made through the DOI Mitigation Fund;

- explain how long will it take for the expected benefits to be realized (i.e., speed to functionality) and have an positive impact on natural systems and communities; and,

- if appropriate, explain how the project will advance innovative technologies and practices that have the potential to drive down the cost and accelerate adoption of resiliency and adaptation strategies.

- **Collaboration and Partnerships (10 points)** – Stakeholders, communities, and municipalities were actively engaged in the planning process. An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that will sustain it after the life of the grant.

- **Work Plan & Logistics (10 points)** – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan. Project team is well qualified and factors such as risk, permits and approvals, and safety are addressed adequately.

- **Budget (10 points)** – The budget is cost-effective, in-line with industry standards and is generally reasonable, and leverages other financial contributions.

- **Youth and/or Veteran Engagement (5 points)** – Project significantly involves youth and/or veterans in the completion of the project. Provides long-term benefits beyond the life of the project to those involved.

GUIDELINES FOR GRANTS

- Projects must be implemented entirely within the states that officially declared a natural disaster as a result of the storm system: Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, and West Virginia.

- Projects that are in the planning stage may be funded in phases, where an initial grant phase may support completion of the planning and design stage of a project and a subsequent phase(s) supports on-the-ground implementation.

- Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

- All appropriate, on-the-ground projects should include a monitoring plan and collect and generate data for future use. In these cases, applicants will be asked to develop Quality Assurance Project Plans

(QAPPs) as part of their grant. Applicants should budget time and resources to complete this task if appropriate.

- Eligible applicants include: non-profit 501(c) organizations (e.g., watershed organizations, homeowners associations, environmental groups, etc.), local governments and agencies (e.g., counties, townships, cities, boroughs, conservation districts, planning districts, utility districts, etc.), recognized tribes, state government agencies and academic institutions.

- Individuals are ***not*** eligible for grants.

- Projects must engage all appropriate local partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project, as well as its integration into local programs and policies. In most cases these partners will include: local government agencies (e.g., departments of planning, zoning, public works, environment, school districts, etc.), local watershed groups, and community leaders.

- Projects must be technically sound and feasible and carried out by qualified individuals and organizations.

- Grantees may only use grant funds for indirect costs if 1) the grantee organization has a federally-approved indirect rate; AND, indirect costs do not exceed 15 percent of the total grant request (even when the federally-approved rate is greater than 15 percent).

- Projects must be ready to begin implementation within 1 year of the grant award.

- Projects must be completed within 2 years of contract signing.

- All applicants with active grants from NFWF must be in good standing in terms of reporting requirements, expenditure of funds, and QAPPs (if required).

INELIGIBLE USES OF GRANT FUNDS

- × Neither grant funds nor matching contributions may be used to support political advocacy, lobbying or litigation.

- × Grantees may not use grant funds to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements.

- × Funds cannot be used for land acquisition.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A GRANT

1. Go to www.nfwf.org/easygrants to register in our Easygrants online system. (If you already are a registered user, use your existing login.) Enter your applicant information.

2. Select the "Apply for Funding" Tab at the top of the screen. Select the "Hurricane Sandy Coastal Resiliency Competitive Grants Program 2013" from the list of options.

3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once you get started, you may save your application in progress and return another time to complete and submit it.

Proposals are due on January 31st, 2014 and must be submitted through NFWF's online application at www.nfwf.org/easygrants.

IMPORTANT DATES

NFWF will host a series of regional workshops and an information webinar for applicants to review this Request for Proposals and respond to questions**. Please only send ONE REPRESENTATIVE per organization as space is limited. You MUST register for the workshops in order to attend.**

- November 18, 2013
  10am – 2pm
  Regional Workshop at Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center
  600 Discovery Lane
  Grasonville, MD 21638

- November 19, 2013
  10am – 2pm
  Regional Workshop at the University of Rhode Island Bay Campus
  Coastal Institute Building Auditorium
  215 S Ferry Road
  Narragansett, RI 02882

- December 9, 2013
  10am – 2pm
  Regional Workshop at Monmouth University
  Magill Club Rooms 107-109
  400 Cedar Avenue
  West Long Branch, NJ 07764

- December 10, 2013
  10am – 2pm
  Regional Workshop at Aviator Sports and Events Center
  Mezzanine
  3159 Flatbush Ave
  Brooklyn, NY 11234

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR A REGIONAL WORKSHOP

- December 17, 2013
  2pm – 4pm
  Webinar for Applicants
  Online – Click here to register

- January 31, 2014
  Proposals Due

- April 2014
  Anticipated announcement of awards*

For additional information, please contact Mandy Chesnutt at Mandy.Chesnutt@nfwf.org or Martin McHugh at Martin.McHugh@nfwf.org.

ADDENDUM: PROJECT METRICS

Applicants will be asked to provide information on what is anticipated to be accomplished during the grant period. Applicants will be asked to track progress against these metrics and report on progress at specific project intervals and in a final report. Metrics are divided into seven strategies: "Species Outcome", "Habitat Restoration", "Habitat Management", 'Capacity, Outreach, Incentives", "Species-specific Strategies", "Planning, Research, Monitoring", and "Other Outcomes". ***Examples*** of metrics that are able to be collected include:

Strategy	Activity	Metric	Description
Species Outcome	Population	Acres occupied by the species	Enter the acres of oyster reef restored
Habitat Restoration	Beach habitat quality improvements	Miles restored	Enter the number of miles restored
Habitat Management	BMP implementation for stormwater runoff	Volume of stormwater prevented	Enter the volume (in gallons) of stormwater prevented from entering water body
Capacity, Outreach, Incentives	Economic benefits	Jobs created	Enter the number of jobs created
Capacity, Outreach, Incentives	Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance	Number of people reached	Enter the number of people reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities
Planning, Research, Monitoring	Management or Governance Planning	Number of plans developed	Enter the number of communities adopting coastal resiliency management plans
Planning, Research, Monitoring	Research	Number of research studies completed	Enter the number of resiliency assessments developed that inform future management decisions

A complete list of metrics is included in the on-line application.