



# NWR Friends Grant Program: Accomplishment Summary

## NFWF CONTACT

**Crystal Boyd**  
Manager,  
crystal.boyd@nfwf.org  
612-564-7253

## PARTNER



Friends of Loxahatchee NWR lead a canoe tour of the refuge. | Credit: Tom Rasmussen

## ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores our nation's fish and wildlife and their habitats. Created by Congress in 1984, NFWF directs public conservation dollars to the most pressing environmental needs and matches those investments with private funds. Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1133 15th Street NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-857-0166

## CENTRAL REGIONAL OFFICE

8011 34th Ave South, Suite 242  
Bloomington, MN 55425  
612-564-7284

## OVERVIEW

For more than 20 years, the National Wildlife Refuge Friends grant program has supported the National Wildlife Refuge System by helping nonprofit refuge Friends organizations serve as effective co-stewards of important natural resources within the Refuge System. The generous support from program partners, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Enbridge, has enabled this grant program to help Friends organizations advance the mission of the Refuge System across the United States.

Since 1998, the grant program has awarded approximately \$2.5 million to more than 240 refuge Friends and other refuge community partners in support of more than 530 completed projects. Grants have provided critical support to help refuge Friends get off the ground and strengthen the viability of their organizations to better serve local wildlife refuges and engage communities in environmental stewardship.

## PROGRAM PRIORITIES IN ACTION

The refuge Friends grant program has funded projects in specific categories including:

- Hands-on projects
- Capacity-building
- Peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing workshops
- Special initiatives such as birding programs and increased access to public lands for hunting and fishing

Collectively, these projects support the overarching program goal of helping Friends organizations build their expertise and capacity to develop and execute projects that benefit the national wildlife refuges and nearby communities.





Salamander overpass and boardwalk construction by Friends of the 500th

### THE MISSION OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE FRIENDS GRANT PROGRAM IS TO SUPPORT FRIENDS ORGANIZATIONS IN BEING EFFECTIVE CO-STEWARDS OF THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM.

**Hands-on Projects:** This category includes on-the-ground projects initiated and managed by the refuge Friends with the support of their refuge. Planting pollinator gardens, constructing a boardwalk and starting a bird watching educational program are examples of the type of work supported in this category. Projects funded in this category advance the Friends organizational capacity by engaging partners, volunteers, and members and providing them with valuable experience and new skills for managing projects.

**Capacity Building:** Grants in this category provide support for establishing new Friends organizations as well as sustaining performance of existing organizations. Funded projects have included website development and facilitated strategic planning. Projects in this category help the refuge Friends take critical next steps for enhancing organizational effectiveness, which in turn increases their effectiveness as a partner with their refuge.

**Peer-to-Peer Workshops:** Grants in this category enable refuge Friends to host and coordinate training workshops with other refuge Friends in their area, state, region or even nationwide. This category enables refuge Friends to grow, share best practices and build professional relationships within a Refuge System community that spans a nationwide network. This in turn increases their effectiveness in supporting the larger Refuge System.

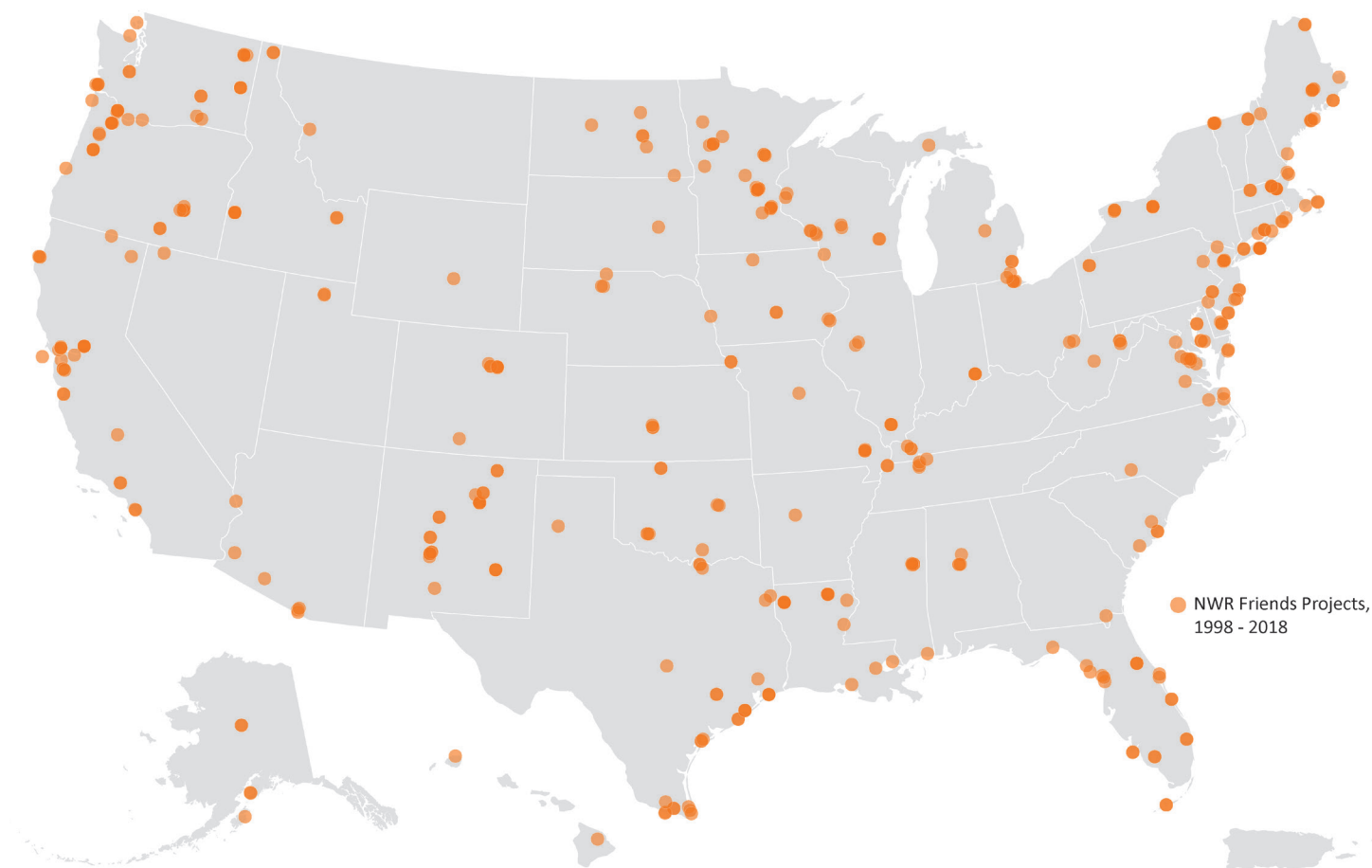
**Special Initiatives:** Grants in this category give the program flexibility to meet the needs of changing priorities of the Refuge System and help engage Friends in those changes. For example, the program offered a special birding initiative when there was a need to support educational programming that focused on birds. Currently, there is a special hunt/fish/access initiative to help engage Friends in supporting their refuge's goals of improving or expanding hunting and fishing programming as well as supporting projects that increase public access.



Birdwatching education program with Friends of Horicon NWR

“We are better together. National wildlife refuges provide premier wildlife conservation opportunities and offer some of the nation’s best wildlife recreation when we join hands with partners like Friends organizations, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and others. Together, we build a better world for our children and the generations that will inherit our legacy.”

— Cynthia Martinez, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System



**\$5,182,900** dedicated by refuge Friends and grantee organizations to increase capacity across the Refuge System

**\$2,549,000** awarded in grants      **\$2,633,900** in grantee match contributions

**533** Projects funded

**1,000** Organizations engaged

**5,700** Volunteers participating



## PROJECT EXAMPLES

### Constructing a Wetland Education Dock

Grantee:.....Friends of Sherburne NWR  
 NFWF Award Amount: ..... \$9,600  
 The Friends of Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge constructed a wetland educational dock to enhance the refuge's Oak Savanna Learning Center youth education priorities. The dock is a valuable tool for helping youth in programs observe and learn about birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals and insects that use the wetland. New interpretive signage also provides visitors with educational information about the refuge's wetland.

### Tetlin Youth and Community Hunting and Fishing Initiative

Grantee:.....Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges  
 NFWF Award Amount: ..... \$6,810  
 The Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges acquired the necessary archery and fishing gear to allow the Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge to teach hunting and fishing skills through culture camps, school programs, and community events. This project allowed the Friends group to increase youth and adult participation in the outdoors and conservation at Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge.

### Soaring Higher – Region 1 Peer-to-Peer Workshop

Grantee:.. Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge  
 NFWF Award Amount: ..... \$4,500  
 The Friends of Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge hosted and coordinated a peer-to-peer workshop that brought together more than 25 members, volunteers and refuge staff to share best practices for increasing organizational capacity and to build stronger partnerships within the Refuge System.

### Increase Access into the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge

Grantee:..... International Wildlife Refuge Alliance  
 NFWF Award Amount: .....\$10,862  
 The International Wildlife Refuge Alliance and its partners will construct a handicap accessible kayak launch on the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge, next to the new John D. Dingell Visitor Center. Over 100,000 visitors are expected to visit the site annually. This launch will provide new recreational opportunities, including hunting and fishing.



Educational programs at Sherburne NWR wetlands dock



Youth archery program at John Heinz NWR



Necedah NWR fishing and ADA kayak launch