

## 2017 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Proposal Due Date: **Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017 by 11:59 PM EDT**

### OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the federal-state Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, is soliciting proposals to restore water quality and habitats of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and streams. NFWF estimates awarding up to \$12 million in grants through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund in 2017, contingent on the availability of funding. Major funding for the Stewardship Fund comes from the EPA. Other important contributions are provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and U.S. Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Altria Group, and CSX.

The Stewardship Fund will award grants through two distinct grant programs: Small Watershed Grants (SWG) and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants (INSR). SWG grants will be awarded for projects within the Chesapeake Bay watershed that promote community-based efforts to protect and restore the diverse natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and streams. INSR grants will be awarded to projects within the Chesapeake Bay watershed that dramatically accelerate quantifiable nutrient and sediment reductions through innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches, methods, and new technologies.

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

To be eligible for funding, all projects must occur wholly within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Special, dedicated funding is available for projects in the Chesapeake Bay watershed in Pennsylvania (see Program Priority 1b and 3a below). Priority consideration will be provided to projects located within [NFWF’s Targeted Rivers and Watersheds](#) identified by NFWF as having especially significant opportunities for shared water quality improvement, habitat restoration, and species recovery outcomes.



**STEWARDSHIP FUND CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES**

**Restore and protect vital habitats**

- ✓ Restore riparian areas (incl. buffers) to improve water quality and wildlife habitat.
- ✓ Restore eroding streambanks to reduce sediment pollution and improve in-stream fish habitat.
- ✓ Restore and enhance wetlands for water quality and habitat.
- ✓ Preserve forests, riparian corridors, wetlands and farmland vital for protecting water quality and wildlife habitat.
- ✓ Improve fish passage to provide access to up-stream habitat for fish target species (esp., Eastern brook trout, river herring, American shad, and American eel).
- ✓ Restore sustainable populations of native oysters.

**Improve conservation on private lands**

- ✓ Reduce nutrient and sediment runoff and restore wetlands, streams, and riparian forested buffers on working forests and farms.
- ✓ Reduce nutrient and sediment pollution and stormwater runoff from residential and commercial properties.

**Improve urban stormwater management**

- ✓ Store, treat and infiltrate stormwater runoff through management practices such as bio-retention and rain gardens, etc.

## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Stewardship Fund supports efforts to simultaneously achieve multiple conservation objectives, especially water quality improvement, habitat restoration, and species recovery, so proposals that demonstrate the ability to do so will receive priority consideration. All grant proposals must address at least one Stewardship Fund Conservation Objective (see above) and all INSR proposals must accelerate reductions of nutrient and sediment pollution to the Chesapeake Bay. These Conservation Objectives have been developed in coordination with the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership.

In addition, the CBP Executive Council signed a new [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) in 2014, outlining 10 goals and 31 associated outcomes for the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, including full implementation of state [Watershed Implementation Plans \(WIPs\)](#) to achieve nutrient and sediment pollution reduction goals under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load. All applicants must document how their proposal aligns with relevant Watershed Agreement outcomes, including relevant WIP priorities addressed by the project.

Funding will be competitively awarded to projects that successfully address at least one of the three program priorities and associated strategies listed below:

- 1) **Targeted River and Watershed Restoration:** NFWF will invest in projects capable of achieving measurable water quality improvements consistent with state WIPs, as well as habitat restoration and species recovery goals for targeted species identified by NFWF and the Chesapeake Bay Program.

While NFWF will fund applicable water quality improvement and habitat restoration projects across the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed, priority will be given to projects that address any of the following strategies within [NFWF's Targeted Rivers and Watersheds](#):

- a) **Increasing Conservation on Working Lands.** Address comprehensive opportunities for water quality improvement and habitat restoration on agricultural lands through outreach and technical assistance to private landowners to increase adoption of conservation and nutrient management plans and implementation of practices that diminish and eliminate nutrient and sediment pollution from agricultural operations. Projects should seek to increase participation in federal Farm Bill programs and other state and federal programs for implementation, explicitly address technical assistance needs, and ensure landowners are invested in the success and sustainability of the project.
- b) **Implementing Priority Agricultural Practices in Pennsylvania.** To maximize near-term nutrient and sediment load reduction opportunities from Pennsylvania's agricultural sector, NFWF is soliciting project proposals that will result in significant, accelerated implementation of cost-effective priority conservation practices in Pennsylvania over the next two to three years, especially in watersheds impaired due to agriculture based on [Pennsylvania's 2014 Integrated Water Quality Report](#) and that align with [NFWF's Targeted Rivers and Watersheds](#).

Priority practices include riparian restoration practices (riparian forest buffers, streambank stabilization, and streamside exclusionary systems for livestock), and soil health practices that combine a variety of erosion and sediment control, agronomic, and tillage and cover cropping practices aimed at building soil organic content, minimizing soil disturbance,



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maximizing soil biodiversity, and reducing nutrient application requirements and nutrient losses. Under this priority funding strategy, practices proposed for implementation must be designed consistent with prevailing standards and specifications relevant to each practice (e.g. Pennsylvania NRCS Field Office Technical Guide).

While priority may be given to projects ready for immediate implementation (construction), applicants may also request funds for landowner outreach, technical assistance, and associated monitoring activities. Applicants are not required to have specific landowners or implementation opportunities identified at the time of application, but will be required to have Landowner Agreements in place prior to design and implementation of conservation practices.

Projects should be appropriately scaled to significantly increase rates of priority practice implementation by maximizing efficiencies in outreach, technical assistance, and BMP construction. Projects that are smaller in scale or proposing the use of existing delivery systems (program infrastructure, staffing and partnership models, etc.) to immediately accelerate practice implementation will receive more favorable consideration under the SWG program. Projects proposing to increase the pace and scale of implementation through new program delivery systems, landowner incentives, or partnership models or the application of existing models at larger regional scales may also apply under the INSR program.

- c) **Restoring Streams, Floodplains, and Wetlands.** Improve water quality and aquatic habitat in agricultural and urban landscapes by increasing the protection and restoration of riparian areas through implementation of riparian forest buffers, livestock exclusion from streams, wetlands restoration and enhancement, nonpoint source pollution controls, and land use protections. Priority will be given to proposals that increase occupied habitat for Eastern brook trout and river herring through strategic riparian restoration and in-stream habitat enhancement, where appropriate. Efforts to improve stream health through direct alterations of the stream channel and adjacent wetlands and floodplain (e.g. in-stream restoration, floodplain reconnection, legacy sediment removal) must clearly document adoption of upland best management practices and/or land use planning strategies to control timing and flow of runoff as a key component of the project in order to ensure sustainability of proposed stream restoration activities post construction.
- d) **Restoring Native Oyster Reefs.** Accelerate restoration of native oyster reefs in designated sanctuaries and other areas with enforceable harvest restrictions through spat production and planting and mitigation of upstream sediment sources impacting restoration sites. Priority areas include the Choptank River in Maryland, and the Piakatank, Lynnhaven, and Lafayette Rivers in Virginia. Projects proposing to address this strategy will receive more favorable consideration under the Small Watershed Grants program.
- e) **Improving Fish Passage.** Remove barriers to historical migratory routes for alewife and blueback herring, as well as American shad, hickory shad, and American eel. Projects should focus on [NFWF's Targeted Rivers and Watersheds](#) and be informed by the [Chesapeake Fish Passage Tool](#). Proposals should include appropriate monitoring strategies to document the return of target species to previously unoccupied areas. Projects proposing

to address this strategy will receive more favorable consideration under the Small Watershed Grants program.

- 2) **Green Infrastructure<sup>1</sup> in Urban Landscapes.** NFWF will invest in projects that build the capacity of local governments and watershed partners to advance green infrastructure (GI) strategies, integrate green infrastructure into existing local government and watershed partner programming, and/or accelerate adoption of green infrastructure practices on public and private lands. All projects must result in quantifiable reductions in the volume of stormwater runoff and nutrient and sediment loads delivered to local streams. While NFWF will fund a wide range of applicable green infrastructure projects, NFWF is specifically soliciting projects that address at least one of the following strategies:
- a) **Integrating GI into Capital Improvement Programs.** Integrate GI approaches into capital improvement and maintenance programs for public works, parks and recreation, emergency management, education, transportation, community redevelopment, etc. Projects that document investment from associated municipal capital improvement and maintenance budgets that will be leveraged or reprogrammed for enhanced GI implementation as a part of the proposal will receive priority consideration.
  - b) **Implementing GI in Small, High-Growth, and Unregulated Communities.** Assist local governments in the demonstration and development of projects and programs that mitigate stormwater impacts in communities experiencing rapid growth, especially those currently unregulated for stormwater management. Proposals should specifically identify and address barriers and employ creative drivers to improve stormwater management in communities without existing regulatory mandates. Projects may include education for local decision-makers, developing appropriate staffing and resource strategies, evaluation of local codes and ordinances, and implementation of associated demonstration projects.
  - c) **Behavior Change for GI Adoption.** Increase adoption of GI practices on residential, commercial, and institutional properties through community-based social marketing (CBSM) strategies. Consistent with CBSM best practices, projects should identify and target a limited number of intended GI behaviors to be adopted based on water quality impact, probability of adoption, and existing rates of implementation. Projects should also identify or propose to research the local barriers to adoption, and develop delivery programs that specifically address those barriers. Interested applicants should consult [\*“Encouraging Sustainable Behavior: A Guide for National Fish and Wildlife Grantees to Implement Social\*](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Green infrastructure is an approach to wet weather management that is cost-effective, sustainable, and environmentally friendly. Green Infrastructure management approaches and technologies infiltrate, evapotranspire, capture and reuse stormwater to maintain or restore natural hydrology.

The preservation and restoration of natural landscape features (such as forests, floodplains and wetlands) are critical components of green stormwater infrastructure. By protecting these ecologically sensitive areas, communities can improve water quality while providing wildlife habitat and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

On a smaller scale, green infrastructure practices include rain gardens, porous pavements, green roofs, infiltration planters, trees and tree boxes, and rainwater harvesting for non-potable uses such as toilet flushing and landscape irrigation.

For more information on specific green infrastructure practices and how they function, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure>.



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[Marketing Campaigns](#)” for general guidance on CBSM approaches and the [Chesapeake Bay Outreach Campaign Database](#) for information on previously-funded projects.

- d) **Community Engagement in GI Planning and Implementation.** Pilot new and/or improved processes for community-based prioritization, site selection, implementation, and maintenance of GI projects. Projects should aim to articulate community-identified goals and objectives beyond stormwater management that can be addressed by GI implementation (e.g. flood management, community open space, and economic development) and, where appropriate, directly provide community members with project leadership opportunities and financial assistance for project participation and implementation. Projects that demonstrate engagement of diverse local partnerships and underserved communities will receive priority consideration.
- 3) **Innovation on Crosscutting Issues.** NFWF will invest in innovative approaches that hold the promise to drive down costs, expand the effectiveness of restoration practices, and accelerate the pace of recovery, including:
- New technologies or techniques for reducing nonpoint nutrient/sediment loads to the Bay; and/or
  - Sustainable improvements in removal efficiencies and/or cost-effectiveness of current practices and approaches.

Innovation projects should seek to affirm proof of concept, and must include clear plans to actively transfer and disseminate information on new approaches to appropriate audiences, including water quality and restoration professionals, public agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. Dissemination activities should utilize available environmental and economic monitoring, assessment, and evaluation data to draw concise, meaningful conclusions about the approach’s technical- and cost effectiveness. The project should utilize multiple communications mechanisms via trusted information sources to ensure effective dissemination (e.g. fact sheets and case studies, how-to manuals, presentation at meetings and professional conferences, in-person trainings, peer-reviewed publications). Successful applicants may be asked to participate in coordinated dissemination activities supported by NFWF.

For proposals seeking support for new technologies or techniques not currently approved by the Chesapeake Bay Program, applicants should document how the new technology or technique addresses social and/or economic barriers to current nutrient and sediment reduction practices and approaches and provide evidence-based prospects for expanding adoption. Proposals involving new or novel technologies or techniques must also include detailed plans for robust performance monitoring to validate estimated water quality benefits.

While NFWF invites all applicable project proposals, NFWF is specifically seeking innovative proposals for the following priorities:

- a) **Industry-Led Partnerships and Market-Based Approaches for Pennsylvania Agriculture.** NFWF is seeking innovative projects that are industry-led partnerships and market-based approaches for long-term nutrient and sediment load reduction from Pennsylvania’s agricultural sector that build upon and leverage existing and emerging collaboratives, private capital, and markets to increase total conservation investment.



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Proposals should demonstrate the potential to generate pollutant load reductions beyond what can be achieved through current approaches for advancing agricultural conservation in Pennsylvania (public and private cost-share and technical assistance programs, federal or state regulatory programs, etc.) and should include partnerships with relevant agricultural sector partners wherever possible, including but not limited to commodity and/or producer associations, agricultural education institutions, agricultural retailers, agricultural lending institutions, food products industries and supply chain stakeholders, etc. Projects should seek to leverage additional contributions from federal, state, and private partners, specifically targeting opportunities to build upon private capital and agricultural markets to advance proposed solutions.

Proposals must provide clear evidence of some measurable nutrient and sediment load reductions during the project period and how nutrient and sediment reduction can be sustained over time.

Example activities include:

- Pilot new and/or creative incentives to increase conservation adoption, including the development of industry standards of excellence, reward and recognition programs for environmental performance beyond regulatory compliance, agricultural certainty and regulatory relief programs, and a host of market-based incentives (such as performance-based liability insurance and operating loan discounts, conservation tax credits and tax relief for conservation equipment purchases, premiums for “clean water” certified and labeled products, institutional purchasing agreements for sustainable food products, etc.)
- Develop farmer-focused and producer-led communications and outreach campaigns that result in increased willingness to implement conservation practices and management that improve soil and stream health. Activities may include new and novel farmer-to-farmer and community-level communications that build capacity of existing conservation adopters and advocates to better communicate with target audiences and recruit other producers into the fold.
- Increase the number and capacity of individuals to provide outreach, guidance, and technical assistance for conservation planning and implementation through innovative education and training, mentorship, and conservation workforce development initiatives.

All projects submitted for consideration under this special funding opportunity should seek to build on ongoing strategic planning and prioritization efforts among Pennsylvania partners for addressing agricultural-related water quality issues in Pennsylvania, including the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s Strategy to Enhance Pennsylvania’s Chesapeake Bay Restoration Effort, the Pennsylvania in the Balance effort coordinated by Pennsylvania State University, and the Joint State-Federal Strategy to Accelerate Nutrient Load Reductions in Pennsylvania’s Chesapeake Bay Watershed released in October 2016.

- b) Regional-Scale Restoration Program Delivery.** NFWF is actively soliciting proposals to establish and expand the capacity of water quality and restoration professionals, public



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agencies, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector to collaborate on the coordinated regional delivery of on-the-ground water quality improvement and habitat restoration programs.

While such regional coordination can take many forms, examples include establishment of regional government authorities for the delivery of stormwater program funding and management at a multi-municipality scale, coalitions of conservation districts and/or watershed organizations for the delivery of technical assistance and coordinated implementation for priority agricultural conservation practices at a multi-county scale, and watershed-based partnerships for stream, wetland, and floodplain restoration. The goal of these efforts is to realize efficiencies in restoration program delivery, expand the pace and scale of restoration actions, and better manage restoration efforts at more relevant scales (e.g. on a watershed basis).

Proposals should aim to increase coordination through network development, shared staffing and equipment, shared planning, prioritization, and decision making, and integration of programs, planning, and funding via organizational mergers, Memoranda of Understanding, new governance models, etc. Projects must clearly demonstrate plans for sustaining new regional coordination and program delivery mechanisms beyond the requested grant term, including clear plans for self-financing, governance, etc.

Example activities include:

- Assessing the effectiveness of individual organizations, existing programs and services, and coordination efforts.
- Assessing the technical and operational capacities and competencies of collaborating organizations to opportunities for more strategic deployment of existing capacities.
- Developing or refining a collaborative strategic plan.
- Investigating and evaluating the potential for organizational collaboration, with the goal of developing a sustainable network or integrating/merging existing organizations as a preferred outcome.
- Improving processes for internal communications, operations, management, and fundraising in support of restoration activities.
- Developing or enhancing cooperative programming for funding, technical support, project identification and prioritization, planning, procurement and purchasing, project management, and other functions directly related to implementation.
- Developing venues for collaborating practitioners to share case studies, lessons learned, credible guidance, and other resources in support of restoration activities.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund has a list of metrics in Easygrants for grantees to choose from for reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table



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below). If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Alyssa Hildt, [Alyssa.Hildt@nfwf.org](mailto:Alyssa.Hildt@nfwf.org), (202) 857-0166, to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric
<p>Water quality improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Lbs nitrogen avoided (annually)</li> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Lbs phosphorus avoided (annually)</li> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Lbs sediment avoided (annually)</li> </ul>
<p>Agricultural-sector water quality improvement  (select from applicable metrics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with BMPs</li> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for livestock fencing - Miles of fencing installed</li> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with conservation tillage</li> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with cover crops</li> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with enhanced nutrient mgt</li> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with rotational grazing</li> </ul>
<p>Stormwater-sector water quality improvement  (select from applicable metrics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for stormwater runoff - Acres with BMPs</li> <li>• CBSF - BMP implementation for stormwater runoff - Volume stormwater prevented</li> </ul>
<p>Habitat restoration and species-specific activities  (select from applicable metrics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBSF - Riparian restoration - Miles restored</li> <li>• CBSF - Instream restoration - Miles restored</li> <li>• CBSF - Wetland restoration - Acres restored</li> <li>• CBSF - Floodplain restoration - Acres restored</li> <li>• CBSF - Eastern Brook Trout - Habitat Quality - # of habitat units improved</li> <li>• CBSF - American oyster - Population - Acres occupied by the species</li> <li>• CBSF - Fish passage improvements - Miles of stream opened</li> <li>• CBSF - Erosion control - Miles restored</li> </ul>
<p>Outreach, capacity building, and community engagement associated with restoration activities  (select from applicable metrics)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CBSF - Building institutional capacity - # FTE with sufficient training</li> <li>• CBSF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached</li> <li>• CBSF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people with changed behavior</li> <li>• CBSF - Volunteer participation - # volunteers participating</li> <li>• CBSF - Research - # research studies completed</li> <li>• CBSF - Research - # studies reported to management</li> </ul>



## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible and Ineligible Entities

#### *Small Watershed Grants*

- ✓ Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, local governments, municipal governments, Indian tribes, and K-12 educational institutions.
- ✗ Ineligible applicants include U.S. federal government agencies, state government agencies, businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations.

#### *Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants*

- ✓ Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Indian tribes, and educational institutions.
- ✗ Ineligible applicants include U.S. federal government agencies, businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations.

- **Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds**

- ✗ NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- ✗ NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund will award up to \$12 million in grants in two categories: Small Watershed Grants (SWG) and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants (INSR).

**Small Watershed Grants (SWG)** of \$20,000 to \$200,000 will be awarded for projects that promote community-based efforts to develop conservation strategies to protect and restore the diverse natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. These grants require minimum non-federal matching contribution equal to one-third of the grant request. All 2017 SWG grants must be completed within two years of grant award.

**Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants (INSR)** of \$200,000 to \$500,000 will be awarded for efforts within the Chesapeake Bay watershed to dramatically accelerate nutrient and sediment reductions by demonstrating innovative, sustainable, and cost-effective approaches. In addition, INSR proposals of up to \$1 million will be considered for projects proposing multiple restoration projects as part of regional-scale collaborative efforts (see Program Priority 3b). These grants encourage 1:1 non-federal matching contributions equal to the grant request. All 2017 INSR grants must be completed within three years of grant award.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.



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**Environmental Results** – Project provides quantifiable improvements in water quality, habitat, and/or other conservation priorities for the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, and contributes toward meeting water quality targets expressed in Chesapeake Bay TMDL Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) and broader conservation goals and outcomes outlined in the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Proposal references existing water quality, habitat, and species monitoring data and programs in the project area and utilizes associated data to validate estimated environmental results with real-world monitoring information.

**Program Priorities and Goals** – Project contributes to the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund Conservation Outcomes, has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success, and addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the Request for Proposals.

**Partnership and Community Engagement** – Project engages diverse local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Non-traditional partners or communities are enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project. Projects successfully demonstrate how prior efforts in the project area or region have informed and shaped proposed approach. Proposals may document match from partners as an indicator of partnership and unique letters of support indicating the partners’ role in and contribution to the project.

**Transferability and Dissemination Plans** – Project includes clear plans to actively transfer and disseminate project-related information to appropriate audiences and relevant stakeholders within the Chesapeake Bay watershed through multiple communications mechanisms, with the goal of expanding adoption of successful approaches and integration into government programs and policies (e.g., state and federal cost share, MS4 program delivery, etc.).

**Technical Merit, Work Plan, and Budget** – Project is technically sound, feasible, cost-effective, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible. Applicants are encouraged to provide documentation of technical assistance either received or committed to by appropriate state and federal agencies, academics and consultants.

## OTHER

**Nutrient and Sediment Load Reductions:** All INSR proposals must demonstrate reductions of nutrient and sediment pollution to local rivers and streams, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay, documenting specific tools and/or methodologies used to produce scientifically-credible estimates of load reductions. SWG applicants proposing to conduct water quality improvement activities are expected to adhere to similar standards. Proposals should also include interim measures used to estimate nutrient reductions such as: wetland acres enhanced, riparian forested buffer miles restored, volume treated by stormwater BMPs, etc.

**FieldDoc:** To assist applicants in generating credible nutrient and sediment load reduction estimates, NFWF has partnered with the Chesapeake Commons and Maryland Department of Natural Resource to develop [FieldDoc](#), a user-friendly tool that allows consistent planning,



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tracking, and reporting of selected water quality improvement activities and associated nutrient and sediment load reductions from proposed grant projects.

FieldDoc currently includes functionality for a wide array of best management practices for water quality improvement, including bank stabilization, bioretention, forest and grass buffers, livestock exclusion, non-tidal wetlands, shoreline management, stream restoration, a range of low-impact residential and commercial-scale stormwater management practices, and a significant number of agricultural best management practices. Unless otherwise approved by NFWF staff, NFWF expects all projects proposing to implement these activities to utilize FieldDoc to calculate estimated load reductions from those activities included in their application.

Upon grant award, NFWF will require all projects submitted under this solicitation to utilize FieldDoc for tracking and reporting of applicable water quality improvement activities during the course of their grant project. See the FieldDoc FAQ and Applicant User Guide available at <http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake>, for more information.

**Budget** – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with OMB Uniform Guidance as applicable ([OMB Uniform Guidance](#)).

**Procurement** – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services in the proposed budget or work plan, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not necessarily constitute NFWF’s express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

**Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support** – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

**Receiving Award Funds** – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

**Compliance Requirements** – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. 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). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.



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**Quality Assurance:** If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation ([www.epa.gov/quality/qapps.html](http://www.epa.gov/quality/qapps.html)). Applicants should budget time and resources to complete this task if appropriate. For more information about NFWF’s Stewardship Fund Quality Assurance process, visit [http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake/Pages/quality\\_assurance.aspx#.VO-S5vnF9KY](http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake/Pages/quality_assurance.aspx#.VO-S5vnF9KY).

**Permits:** Applicants will be required to indicate the status of all permits required to comply with federal, state or local requirements. 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 U.S, 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

**Federal Funding:** Federally-funded projects must operate in compliance with the OMB Uniform Guidance as applicable to the applicant. The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

**Good Standing Policy:** All applicants with active grants from NFWF must be in good standing in terms of reporting requirements, expenditure of funds, and QAPPs (if required). In addition, NFWF may also consider an applicant’s standing under grant programs administered by external partners in determining performance-based qualifications for proposed grantees. Active grantees with questions on their current standing are encouraged to contact NFWF staff in advance of submitting applications.

## TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change and contingent on the availability of funding. Please check the Program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information (<http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake>).

Applicant Webinar ( <a href="#">Registration</a> )	<i>Tuesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 10:00am EDT</i>
Pennsylvania Webinar ( <a href="#">Registration</a> )	<i>Wednesday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 10:00am EDT</i>
FieldDoc Webinar ( <a href="#">Registration</a> )	<i>Thursday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 10:00am EDT</i>
Proposal Due Date	<i>Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 11:59pm EDT</i>
Review Period	<i>May – June</i>
Awards Announced	<i>August (anticipated)</i>

## HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Easygrants system.

Go to [easygrants.nfwf.org](http://easygrants.nfwf.org) to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information.

1. Once on your homepage, click the “Apply for Funding” button and select this RFP’s “Funding Opportunity” from the list of options.
2. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

## APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded at <http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake>.

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded at <http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake>. Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website’s “Applicant Information” page (<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx>).

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact Jake Reilly ([jake.reilly@nfwf.org](mailto:jake.reilly@nfwf.org)), Elizabeth Nellums ([elizabeth.nellums@nfwf.org](mailto:elizabeth.nellums@nfwf.org)), or Alyssa Hildt ([alyssa.hildt@nfwf.org](mailto:alyssa.hildt@nfwf.org)) via e-mail or by phone at (202) 857-0166.

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

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