NFWF

Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund

Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

2016 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Proposal Due Date: ***Tuesday, May 10th 2016*** **by 11:59 PM EDT**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is soliciting proposals to restore the habitats and water quality of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and streams. The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund (Stewardship Fund) will award $10-12 million in grants in partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Program. Major funding for the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund comes from the EPA. Other important contributions are provided by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Forest Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Altria Group, and CSX.

The Stewardship Fund will award grants in two categories: Small Watershed Grants (SWGs) and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants (INSRs). SWGs will be awarded for projects that promote community-based efforts to protect and restore the diverse natural resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and streams. INSRs will be awarded to projects 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, projects must occur wholly within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Priority consideration will be provided to projects located within NFWF's Targeted Rivers and Watersheds. A more detailed interactive map can be viewed here.

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 wildlife 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 and habitat improvements, 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). 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 Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) (available here) to achieve nutrient and sediment pollution reduction goals under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load. All applicants will be required to document how their proposal aligns with those Watershed Agreement outcomes that are directly aligned with NFWF's Stewardship Fund Conservation Objectives (see Attachment A for further information). The relevant WIP priorities addressed by the project should also be documented.

Priority for both SWG and INSR funding will be given to projects that successfully address at least one of the following four program priorities.

1) **Targeted River and Watershed Restoration:** NFWF will invest in Targeted Rivers and Watersheds (available here) where NFWF has determined that opportunities exist to simultaneously achieve measurable water quality improvements consistent with state WIPs, as well as habitat restoration and species recovery goals for targeted species that include Eastern brook trout, river herring, and native oysters. Targeted River and Watershed Restoration proposals must achieve the Stewardship Fund Conservation Objectives in regions shown on the map by implementing at least one of the following strategies:

   - Improve water quality and increase occupied habitat for Eastern brook trout through strategic riparian, in-stream, and fish passage improvements. Projects should focus on high priority watersheds for restoration and enhancement, as identified by the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (see here for more information), particularly those with allopatric populations and large adjacent watersheds of unoccupied habitat. Projects that couple habitat restoration with efforts to mitigate the threat of future degradation (e.g. climate resiliency, upland BMP implementation, land preservation and land use planning) will receive priority consideration.
   - Improve stream health and water quality in agricultural and urban landscapes by increasing the protection and restoration of riparian areas through implementation of riparian forest buffers, livestock exclusion, and land use protections. Efforts to improve stream health through direct alterations of the stream channel and adjacent floodplain (e.g. in-stream restoration, floodplain reconnection, legacy sediment removal) must document adoption of upland BMPs and/or land use planning strategies as a key component of the project.
   - Improve water quality and habitat for migratory waterfowl, including American black duck, through the protection, restoration, and enhancement of tidal wetlands and connected habitats. Strategies should account for anticipated climate change impacts, including sea level rise and wetland migration, to ensure sustained benefit to target species.

- 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 included the Choptank River in Maryland, and the Piakatank, Lynnhaven, and Lafayette Rivers in Virginia. Projects that integrate reef restoration and protection with furtherance of alternative economic opportunities for impacted local watermen will receive priority consideration.
- 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 (available here). Proposals should include a robust monitoring strategy to support and/or establish long-term spawning run counts within priority watersheds.

2) **Green Infrastructure in Developed Landscapes.** NFWF will invest in projects that build local government capacity to advance green infrastructure strategies, integrate green infrastructure into existing local government programs, 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. NFWF is specifically soliciting projects that address at least one of the following strategies:

- Integrate green infrastructure approaches into capital improvement and maintenance programs for public works, parks and recreation, emergency management, education, transportation, community redevelopment, etc. Projects should document investment from associated municipal capital improvement and maintenance budgets that will be leveraged or reprogrammed for enhanced green infrastructure implementation as a part of the proposal.
- Assist local governments in the demonstration and development of projects and programs that mitigate stormwater impacts in communities experiencing rapid growth currently unregulated for stormwater management. Proposals should specifically identify and address barriers to stormwater management in communities without existing regulatory mandates. Projects may include education for local decision-makers, developing appropriate staffing and resource strategies, and implementation of associated demonstration projects.
- Increase adoption of green infrastructure practices on residential, commercial, and institutional properties. Projects should identify and target a limited number of intended green infrastructure 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 Marketing Campaigns*" available here for further guidance.
- Pilot new processes for community-based prioritization, site selection, and implementation of green infrastructure projects. Projects should aim to identify community-identified goals and objectives beyond stormwater management that can be addressed by green infrastructure implementation (e.g. flood management, community open space, economic development). Projects that demonstrate engagement of diverse local partnerships and underserved communities will receive priority consideration.

3) **Regional-Scale Restoration Program Delivery.** This year, NFWF is actively soliciting proposals to establish and sustain new regional institutions for the coordinated delivery of on-the-ground restoration efforts. Proposals should offer administrative, technical, and/or management efficiencies in achieving Stewardship Fund Conservation Objectives for contributing local partners at a multi-municipality or multi-county scale. Projects may include regional planning and prioritization, shared staffing and equipment, and support for coordinating functions, though projects must result in on-the-ground restoration outcomes with measurable nutrient and sediment load reductions. Projects must also clearly demonstrate plans for sustaining new regional delivery mechanisms beyond the requested grant term, including clear plans for self-financing, governance, etc. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

   - Regional authorities and collaborative efforts of local governments for the delivery of stormwater program funding and management at a multi-municipality scale.
   - Coalitions and collaborative efforts of (soil and water) conservation districts for the delivery of technical assistance and coordinated implementation for priority agricultural conservation practices at a multi-county scale.
   - Regional partnerships for stream, wetland, and floodplain restoration.

4) **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:

   a) New technologies or techniques for reducing nonpoint nutrient/sediment loads to the Bay; and/or
   b) Sustainable improvements in removal efficiencies and/or cost-effectiveness of current practices and approaches.

   For proposals seeking support for new technologies or techniques not currently approved by the Chesapeake Bay Program, applicants should document how the technology or technique addresses social and/or economic barriers to approved nutrient and sediment reduction approaches, include detailed plans for performance monitoring, and discuss evidence-based prospects for expanding adoption.

   NFWF is specifically seeking innovative proposals for the following priorities:

   - Manure Byproducts: Demonstrate and scale up the application of novel technologies and approaches for using excess manure in the creation of alternative value-added byproducts. Grants will not be provided for research and development and must focus on increasing adoption of proven technologies and approaches. Applicants should include plans for environmental and economic performance monitoring and projects should target areas with demonstrated manure nutrient imbalances.
   - Climate-Resilient Practices: Demonstrate the application of climate impact models and resiliency considerations in the design and implementation of water quality improvement practices. Projects may address both practices most likely to both provide increased community resilience to projected climate impacts, as well as those most likely to withstand projected climate impacts for sustained water quality improvement function.
   - Public-Private Partnerships: Better integrate the private sector into restoration financing, implementation, and management. Projects should identify how they plan to create or

leverage dedicated public revenue sources for restoration, clear and enforceable regulatory drivers, and local institutional capacity to drive down the costs and improve efficiency of restoration efforts.

Applicants may also submit innovative projects that fall outside of the aforementioned priorities as well. Innovation projects should seek to affirm the proof of concept, and actively transfer new approaches and are encouraged to include all environmental and economic monitoring, assessment, and evaluation to draw meaningful conclusions about program or technology effectiveness, and to include written case studies documenting the results.

ELIGIBILITY

- **Eligible and Ineligible Entities**

Small Watershed Grants

- ✓ Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, local governments, municipal governments, and 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. Examples include efforts to: satisfy TMDL and Watershed Implementation Plan requirements through innovative technologies, program delivery approaches, financial incentives, etc.; implement municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permits at lower cost and greater community benefit using green infrastructure approaches; bring agricultural producers into compliance with conservation and nutrient management planning as part of efforts to enhance performance beyond regulatory requirements.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund will award approximately $10-12 million grants in two categories: Small Watershed Grants (SWG) and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants (INSRG).

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 valued at 25% of the total project cost, equal to

one-third of the grant request. All 2016 SWG grants must be completed within two years of grant award.

Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants (INSR) of $200,000 to $750,000 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. These grants encourage non-Federal matching contributions valued at 50% of the total project cost, equal to the grant request. All 2016 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.

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.

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to Stewardship Fund Conservation Outcomes and addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the Request for Proposal.

Partnership and Community Engagement – Project engages local community and relevant partners to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Projects successfully demonstrate how prior efforts in the region have informed and shaped proposed approach. Proposals may document match from partners as an indicator of partnership.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities within the Chesapeake Bay watershed and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies (e.g., state and Federal cost share, MS4 program delivery, etc.).

Work Plan – Project is technically sound and feasible, 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.

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).

OTHER

Nutrient and Sediment Load Reductions: All INSR proposals must be able to demonstrate reductions of nutrient and sediment pollution to local rivers and streams, and ultimately the Chesapeake Bay. Proposals should include scientifically credible estimates of both short and

long-term nutrient and/or sediment load reductions expected as a result of the project. All INSR applicants must provide documentation in their application illustrating the basis for projected load reductions, and SWG applicants are encouraged to do so, as well. Proposals should also include interim measures used to estimate nutrient reductions such as: wetland acres enhanced, acres forest acres restored, riparian forested buffer miles restored, stormwater BMPs, etc.

FieldDoc: This year, NFWF is excited to introduce the FieldDoc tool to allow for user-friendly nutrient and sediment load reduction calculations for selected practices proposed by Stewardship Fund grant applicants. Applicants proposing to implement livestock exclusion, streambank or shoreline stabilization, rain barrels, urban nutrient management, impervious cover removal, bio-retention, and grass or forest buffers, can use FieldDoc to calculate estimated load reductions from those practices included in their application.

A variety of tools and resources are available to help applicants estimate nutrient and sediment load reductions from proposed projects, and FieldDoc may or may not be the most appropriate tool for estimating load reductions from your proposed project. FieldDoc will be expanded in future years to account for additional BMPs and will include additional functionality in future years to improve its use at the application stage for prospective NFWF grantees. See the FieldDoc FAQ and Applicant User Guide available at http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake, for more information.

WIP Reporting: Applicants should ensure that BMPs implemented as a result of the project support applicable WIP goals and milestones for restoring the Chesapeake Bay to the greatest extent possible (http://www.chesapeakebay.net/about/programs/watershed). NFWF will work with grantees and state representatives to ensure that applicable BMPs are reported to the appropriate state reporting entity.

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). 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.

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

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). 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. Please check the Program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information (http://www.nfwf.org/chesapeake).

✓ Applicant Webinar (Registration)	*Tuesday, April 5th, 10:00am EDT*
✓ FieldDoc Webinar (Registration)	*Thursday, April 7th, 10:00am EDT*
✓ Proposal Due Date	*Tuesday, May 10th, 11:59pm EDT*
✓ Review Period	*May – July*
✓ Awards Announced	*Mid-August*

HOW TO APPLY

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

1. Go to 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.

2. Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.

3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once as 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), Elizabeth Nellums (elizabeth.nellums@nfwf.org), or Mark Melino (mark.melino@nfwf.org) via e-mail or by phone at (202) 857-0166.

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

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email:	Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail:	202-595-2497
Hours:	9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.
Include:	Your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.

ATTACHMENT A:

SELECTED 2014 WATERSHED AGREEMENT OUTCOMES
ALIGNED WITH STEWARDSHIP FUND CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Oysters: Continually increase finfish and shellfish habitat and water quality benefits from restored oyster populations. Restore native oyster habitat and populations in 10 tributaries by 2025 and ensure their protection.

Wetlands: Continually increase the capacity of wetlands to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Create or reestablish 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and enhance the function of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025.

Black Duck: By 2025, restore, enhance and preserve wetland habitats that support a wintering population of 100,000 black ducks, a species representative of the health of tidal marshes across the watershed.

Stream Health: Continually improve stream health and function throughout the watershed. Improve health and function of ten percent of stream miles above the 2008 baseline for the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Brook Trout: Restore and sustain naturally reproducing brook trout populations in Chesapeake headwater streams with an eight percent increase in occupied habitat by 2025.

Fish Passage: Continually increase available habitat to support sustainable migratory fish populations in Chesapeake Bay freshwater rivers and streams. By 2025, restore historical fish migratory routes by opening 1,000 additional stream miles, with restoration success indicated by the consistent presence of alewife, blueback herring, American shad, hickory shad, American eel and brook trout.

Forest Buffers: Continually increase the capacity of forest buffers to provide water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Restore 900 miles per year of riparian forest buffer and conserve existing buffers until at least 70 percent of riparian areas throughout the watershed are forested.

Tree Canopy: Continually increase urban tree canopy capacity to provide air quality, water quality and habitat benefits throughout the watershed. Expand urban tree canopy by 2,400 acres by 2025.

2017 and 2025 WIPs: By 2017, have practices and controls in place that are expected to achieve 60 percent of the nutrient and sediment pollution load reductions necessary to achieve applicable water quality standards compared to 2009 levels. By 2025, have all practices and controls installed to achieve the Bay's water quality standards.

Healthy Watersheds: Sustain state-identified healthy waters and watersheds recognized for their high quality and/or high ecological value.

Citizen Stewardship: Increase the number and diversity of trained and mobilized citizen volunteers with the knowledge and skills needed to enhance the health of their local watersheds.

Local Leadership: Continually increase the knowledge and capacity of local officials on issues related to water resources and in the implementation of economic and policy incentives that will support local conservation actions.

Diversity: Identify minority stakeholder groups that are not currently represented in the leadership, decision-making and implementation of conservation and restoration activities and create meaningful opportunities and programs to recruit and engage them in the restoration effort.

Protected Lands: By 2025, protect an additional two million acres of lands throughout the watershed including 225,000 acres of wetlands and 695,000 acres of forest land of highest value for maintaining water quality.

Sustainable Schools: Continually increase the number of schools in the region that reduce the impact of their buildings and grounds on their local watershed, environment and human health through best practices, including student-led protection and restoration projects.

Climate Adaptation: Continually pursue, design and construct restoration and protection projects to enhance the resiliency of Bay and aquatic ecosystems from the impacts of coastal erosion, coastal flooding, more intense and more frequent storms and sea level rise.