



Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists Grant Program

2015 Request for Proposals

Full Proposal Due Date: ***Tuesday, December 16, 2014 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time***

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in cooperation with its federal partners, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and Forest Service (USFS) announce an initiative to connect youth to the outdoors by providing financial support for conservation employment programs. The initiative, *Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists*, brings together public and private partners to support those organizations that are developing innovative conservation job opportunities for youth on public lands. These job opportunities, in turn, expose young people, particularly urban, tribal and minority youth, to the natural world and career opportunities available in conservation.

In 2015, approximately \$1.83 million (\$1,000,000 BLM, \$425,000 Reclamation (anticipated) and \$405,000 USFS) will be available for matching grants nationwide. The funding is part of the 21st Century Conservation Service Corps (21CSC) effort to provide meaningful employment opportunities to young Americans to protect, restore, and enhance our nation's great outdoors. Project work funded through this program is restricted to habitat and species restoration projects that directly benefit BLM, Reclamation and/or USFS facilities, lands, programs or mission.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The geographic focus is national, with an emphasis on projects located on or directly benefiting the land, facilities, programs, or mission of BLM, Reclamation and/or USFS. A portion of the Reclamation funding (\$200,000) is specifically available for projects in the Desert Terminal Lakes (DTL) region of Nevada/California that complement the efforts of the Walker Basin Restoration Program (see Appendix B for DTL priorities). Reclamation's remaining anticipated funding (\$225,000) will be available for projects located within Reclamation's 17-state area. (See Appendix A for examples of Reclamation Youth projects).

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Priority for grants will be given to projects that successfully achieve the following objectives:

- Innovative full-time or part-time conservation job opportunities (minimum 80 hours per youth)* that include conservation education for young people, particularly urban and minority youth;

- Hands-on implementation of on-the-ground restoration, stewardship, monitoring, and other conservation related projects to benefit BLM, Reclamation and/or USFS lands, adjacent areas, facilities and programs directly benefiting the agency's mission;
- Partnership building with diverse entities including state and local agencies, urban organizations, tribes, non-profits, corporations, and foundations to leverage federal dollars awarded with non-federal contributions to the project;
- Mentorship and training opportunities for youth with natural resource professionals, particularly BLM, Reclamation and/or USFS employees.

* This program defines "youth" as a person aged 16-25 years old.

ELIGIBILITY

• Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- ✓ Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, educational institutions, Indian tribes, BLM field units (eligible for BLM funds only).
- ✗ Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies, businesses, unincorporated individuals, 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.

• Agency Support Requirement

- All non-BLM applicants must coordinate with, and receive a letter of support from:
 - Reclamation Field Office, Area Office, or Regional Office
 - USFS Forest Supervisor, Line Officer or Regional Office
- The letter of support must be submitted with the application prior to the RFP deadline in order for the application to be considered.
- Applicants who have not submitted a letter of interest in becoming a recognized 21CSC participant are strongly encouraged to do so. More information on how to become a recognized 21CSC participant can be found here: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-07-01/html/2013-15644.htm>.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

In 2015, approximately \$1.75 million (\$1,000,000 BLM, \$425,000 Reclamation (anticipated) and \$405,000 USFS) will be available for matching grants nationwide. Due to funding constraints, applicants seeking BLM funds will be limited to no more than \$75,000, applicants seeking Reclamation and USFS funds will be limited to no more than \$50,000. Projects in partnership with multiple federal agencies will be considered at higher levels. There is no limit to the overall grant size when match is included. This program has one round of applications and awards approximately 40 - 50 grants per year.

Project Period

The project period should be six months to eighteen months from the award date.

Matching Contributions

A minimum 1:1 matching contributions of non-federal cash and/or in-kind contributions is required for projects seeking BLM or USFS funds (a 100% non-federal cost-share of the federal funds is required). A minimum 1:0.5 match of non-federal cash and/or in-kind contributions is required for projects seeking Reclamation funds (a 25% non-federal cost-share of the federal funds is required). Projects with higher match ratios and diversity of matching contributions will be given priority consideration.

To be eligible, matching contributions must be:

- Verifiable from the grantee's records
- Not included as contributions for any other award
- Necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Are allowable costs based on the program and funding source guidelines
- Committed directly to the project and must be used within the period of performance

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.

Required Criteria:

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to the Program's overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the Request for Proposal.

Technical Merit – 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.

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Detailed Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with OMB Cost Allowability Circulars as applicable (www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default).

Other Criteria:

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

Communication – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

OTHER

- a. **General:** Applicants will be required to indicate the status of all permits required to comply with federal, state or local requirements.
- b. **Federal Funding Requirements:** Projects selected to receive Federal funding may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, 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. Federally-funded projects must operate in compliance with the OMB: Administrative, Cost Allowability and Audit requirements as applicable to the applicant. (NOTE: this will change in December 2014) www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_default.

- c. **Permits:** 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

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the Program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information ([Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists](#)).

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|--------------------------|--|
| ✓ Full Proposal Due Date | <i>December 16, 2014 by 11:59pm Eastern Time</i> |
| ✓ Review Period | <i>January – March, 2014</i> |
| ✓ Awards Announced | <i>Late April 2014</i> |

HOW TO APPLY

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

1. Go to www.nfwf.org/easygrants 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 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 [Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists](#).

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded at [Developing the Next Generation of Conservationists](#). 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:

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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.

APPENDIX A

Example Bureau of Reclamation Youth Projects

Great Plains Region: Various project locations.

Project work will focus on vegetation rehabilitation and maintenance in areas that have sustained a loss of critical habitat from floods and other surface disturbance activities. Native vegetation restoration projects would emphasize riparian communities, native upland plant communities, and restoration projects and fisheries and wildlife habitat improvements. Planning, designing and implementing habitat restoration activities through partnership organizations emphasizes hands-on work efforts that not only focus on skill-building and conservation education in the field, but provides invaluable skill sets and understanding, as student crews work hand-in-hand with staff specialists about erosion control measures, invasive weeds, and considerations for selecting native vegetation plantings suitable for specific habitat types as part of the vegetative restoration work.

Lower Colorado Region: Various potential locations

Reclamation would work with one or more partners to remove invasive species and replant native vegetation on Reclamation lands managed for recreation purposes by our local land management partners. The invasive species removal which is primarily Salt Cedar would provide critical fuel reduction in areas that would function as a critical fire break. Reclamation would work with Clark County, and or Mohave County to identify the key areas that fit into the long term land management plans for the areas.

Mid Pacific Region: Central California

The New Melones and Lake Berryessa Field Offices have a combined total of approximately 40 miles of existing recreational trails throughout the facilities. Additionally, Central California Area Office plans to expand these recreation resources to meet growing public demand. Work would include the maintenance of existing trails, as well as the development in new trails throughout New Melones and Lake Berryessa.

Pacific Northwest Region: South Fork Boise River

The Snake River Area Office forecasts a need for rehabilitation of priority fire - disturbed areas in the South Fork Boise River corridor 40 miles southwest of Boise, Idaho. The river corridor area has been severely affected from wildfire in 2013 and mudslides that followed. Reclamation management of these lands for quality of critical habitat for endangered species could benefit from strategic riparian and upland vegetation replanting and fencing. The USFS has committed to planting some of the higher elevation locations; however, some of the lower elevation areas need attention. Other government entities have also identified a need to re-plant in this area, but are restricted by limited funds. This work could create an opportunity to engage youth in habitat enhancement and conservation education.

Upper Colorado Region: Various potential locations

Reclamation's Western Colorado Area Office needs assistance in revegetation efforts in an area where Reclamation removed tamarisk and Russian olive along the river and constructed a 2-acre wetland to receive return flows. Youth crews could be used to transplant wetland plants from other wetlands in the area to vegetate the constructed wetlands, cut and plant willow and cottonwood poles, and plant other riparian plants purchased as nursery stock.

APPENDIX B

Desert Terminal Lake Restoration Program Priorities

Terminal Lakes are lakes formed at the end points of enclosed watershed basins. These lakes have no outlets and, therefore, are greatly affected by variations in inflow caused by upstream diversions of surface water, groundwater pumping, and changes in the hydrologic cycle. Desert Terminal Lakes (DTL) funding was originally established by Public Law 101-171 in 2002 to provide water to a unique collection of at-risk natural desert terminal lakes in the northwestern Great Basin. Subsequent legislative amendments made clear that the freshwater lakes of concern include Pyramid, Summit, and Walker Lakes in Nevada and their associated watersheds (i.e., the Carson, Truckee and Walker River basins in Nevada/California, and the Summit Lake basin in Nevada).

All proposed projects must meet the current DTL authority (PL 101-171 Section 2507, as amended), which continues to include providing water to at-risk natural desert terminal lakes as well as the following additional uses:

For the benefit of at-risk natural desert terminal lakes and associated riparian and watershed resources, in any case in which there are willing sellers or willing participants, [DTL funds] may be used –

- (1) to lease water;*
- (2) to purchase land, water appurtenant to the land, and related interests; and*
- (3) for efforts consistent with researching, supporting, and conserving fish, wildlife, plant, and habitat resources.*

A youth work program would provide employment opportunities for young adults and expose them to the career options available in the conservation field, as well as accomplish desired goals of the DTL legislation.

Scope of work

- Develop and implement an outdoor seasonal work program for young adults. The program should emphasize work in areas of conservation, wildlife habitat, agriculture, irrigation practices, native plant cultivation and/or restoration, or other closely related fields.
- Proposals should have a geographic focus in Pyramid, Summit, and Walker Lakes in Nevada and their associated watersheds (i.e., the Carson, Truckee and Walker River basins in Nevada/California, and the Summit Lake basin in Nevada).
- Season & time of operation should consider adverse weather conditions for working outdoors and student workers enrolled in regular classes.
- Proposals should include desired qualifications, knowledge, skills and abilities of supervisory staff.