



Grassroots Guidelines for NFWF Grant Proposals

Working with National Staff to Secure Grants from
the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
March 2013

NFWF Grants: A Collaborative Approach

The cornerstone of TU's success is our grassroots--based structure, with locally raised funds going into locally run projects.

TU has over 400 chapters and 35 councils, and we are always expanding our influence into new watersheds. Because of this, we need to be mindful in our coordination efforts, particularly when it comes to fundraising at the federal level.

In 2012, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) requested that all grant proposals from TU's chapters be coordinated through local, regional, and national staff.

For chapters and councils that are developing larger projects and considering applying for grants from NFWF or other federal programs, coordinating with TU staff is a great way to improve the strength of your application and increase your chance of getting the grant.

By working together, we have the opportunity to significantly increase the number and size of NFWF grants received by TU at all levels.

Why NFWF Is An Important Funder

Established in 1984, NFWF has awarded more than 12,000 grants totaling \$2 billion.

NFWF currently maintains 60 different grant programs, with only about 10% of these programs being applicable to the work of TU at a local and national level.

For the past 20 years, NFWF has been one of TU's primary and consistent federal funders, awarding grants to the national organization, as well as councils. A few chapters have received NFWF funding as well.

Why NFWF Grants Require Coordination

While NFWF has requested that TU chapters and councils coordinate on grants with TU national staff, that's not the only reason to work together.

Applying for and administering NFWF grants, as well as other federal grant programs, can be quite complicated. They:

- Typically start at \$25,000 or higher (projects with a larger scope and impact)

- Require at least a 1:1 match of non-federal dollars
- Have complex contract and reporting requirements
- Raise the potential for an audit of a chapter or council because its federal money.

Things To Consider Before Applying For A NFWF Grant

For many chapters and councils, applying for NFWF or other federal funds and executing on the grant as promised may be a significant challenge.

Before considering a federal grant application, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the project a major priority for our chapter/council's mission?
- Do we have the organizational capacity to apply for the grant, secure the matching funds, manage and report on the grant, and implement the project?
- Will the project outcome strengthen our chapter/council?
- Is the project a priority for the federal funder?

Steps To Start The Application Process

As mentioned previously, coordination between TU chapters and councils and TU staff is critical when applying for federal grants. This coordination opens the lines of communication, helps to improve the strength of proposals and applications that will be submitted, and increases TU's overall chance for funding. This transparency also helps when applying to foundations or corporate funders.

What's more, coordination between the local grassroots and TU staff ensures that federal and state agencies, foundations, and other grantmakers have a positive experience working with TU and are encouraged and inspired to become even stronger supporters of our conservation mission.

Before starting on your application, follow these three steps:

1. First, discuss the proposal at your chapter/council board meeting and review the questions listed in the "Things to Consider" section above to discover if the application merits submittal.
2. Reach out to other nonprofit conservation organizations in your community (land trusts, watershed associations etc...) to gauge their interest in collaborating on the project and/or writing a letter of support for your grant proposal.
3. Contact your state's NLC Representative, a TU staff member in your area, or a member of the grassroots NLC Fundraising work group to discuss your project.

TU Fundraising Workgroup Resource Contacts

TU grassroots volunteers on the NLC Fundraising Workgroup can be a great resource to help you sound out your ideas for fundraising. The members of the workgroup each have specialty areas where they can offer advice:

Jim Walker – NLC Arizona
Banquets & Special Events
james.l.walker@cox.net

Chris Moore – NLC Vermont
General Fundraising
splitcane@gmail.com

Jeff Yates – NLC Connecticut
Corporate Giving and
Foundation & Federal Grants
nlc@cttrout.org

Larry Vigil – NLC Georgia
Special Raffles (ie 'Dream Trip')
Lvflyfish@bellsouth.net

Scott Hood – NLC Oklahoma
Promoting Events
shood1849@aol.com

Jeff Whitten – NLC Missouri
General Fundraising
motrout@aol.com

TU National Resource Contacts

To help plan and strengthen your grant proposal and project, please remember to reach out to your chapter and council leadership and address the questions under the 'Things to Consider' section above. Once vetted and agreed upon that you want to pursue a NFWF grant, please contact one of the following TU national contacts to discuss:

Rob Keith
Volunteer Operations Coordinator
(703) 284-9425
rkeith@tu.org

Stephanie Davison
Foundation & Government Grants Director
(703) 284-9436
sdavison@tu.org

Joe McGurrin
Resources Director
(410) 643-1976
jmcgurrin@tu.org