

Deadline for EPA Five Star Restoration/Education Grants is Feb. 14, 2011

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Five Star Restoration Program brings together students, conservation corps, other youth groups, citizen groups, corporations, landowners and government agencies to provide environmental education and training through projects that restore wetlands and streams. The program provides challenge grants, technical support and opportunities for information exchange to enable community-based restoration projects. Funding levels are modest, from \$10,000 to \$40,000, with \$20,000 as the average amount awarded per project.

Following are the EPA's solicitation for proposals and application instructions. The Five Star program could be a great way for citizen volunteers to receive financial support for restoration, education and ongoing management activities to improve the quality of their community water resource. If you are a member of such a group, contact the coordinator in your county for help in developing a plan for a project that would qualify for this kind of funding. The Five Star program awards grants annually, so if you are not ready this year, it's a good time to begin planning for next year.

KEY ELEMENTS OF A FIVE STAR PARTNERSHIP:

- **On-the-Ground Restoration:** Projects must include on-the-ground wetland, riparian, in stream and/ or coastal habitat restoration.
- **Environmental Education:** Projects must integrate meaningful education into the restoration project either through community outreach, participation and/or integration with K-12 environmental curriculum.
- **Measurable Results:** Projects must result in measurable ecological, educational and community.

For more information:

- [Five Star Restoration Fact Sheet](#)
- [Five Star Brochure](#) (PDF, 2 pages, 1.3 MB)

Request for Proposals and Application Instructions follow



Five Star Restoration Program 2011 Request for Proposals

Applications must be submitted online by midnight EST, Monday, Feb. 14.

OVERVIEW

The Five Star Restoration Program seeks to develop community capacity to sustain local natural resources for future generations by providing modest financial assistance to diverse local partnerships for wetland, riparian, and coastal habitat restoration. The National Association of Counties, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC), in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Southern Company, and FedEx, are pleased to solicit applications for Five Star.

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GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS AND FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Nominal funding is available nationwide from EPA, as well as from our corporate sponsors targeting several southeastern states and 12 U.S. cities. In 2011, NFWF anticipates the following funding will be available:

- **US EPA Office of Water:** Approximately \$200,000 is available for projects throughout the United States, with a focus on regions not served by other funders.
- **Southern Company:** Approximately \$200,000 is available from Southern Company and its operating companies (Georgia Power, Alabama Power, Gulf Power, and Mississippi Power) to support projects in the Southern Company service area, which includes:
 - ✓ **Georgia** (excluding Union, Fannin and Towns Counties)
 - ✓ **Alabama** (excluding Lauderdale, Colbert, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, Morgan, Jackson, DeKalb, Cherokee and Cullman Counties)
 - ✓ **The Florida Panhandle** (west of the Apalachicola River)
 - ✓ **Southeast Mississippi** (23 counties, from Meridian to the coast, with the west boundary running from Pearl River County to Union County)

Visit www.southerncompany.com/aboutus/about.aspx to view a map of the Southern Company Service Area.

- **FedEx EarthSmart Outreach:** Approximately \$375,000 is available from FedEx's EarthSmart Outreach program to support urban conservation and restoration in the following 11 metropolitan areas:

**Boston
Chicago
Dallas
Indianapolis**

**Los Angeles
Memphis
Newark
Pittsburgh**

**San Francisco/Oakland
Seattle
Washington, DC**

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The Five Star Restoration Program is open to any public or private entity that can receive grants. While partnerships are encouraged to include state and federal agencies, those entities **may not** serve as the grantee **unless** the community partners demonstrate that the state or federal agency is best suited to coordinate the community-based project.

GRANT SIZE

Grants will vary in size, duration and scale. In general, smaller-scale, one-year projects will be eligible for grants \$10,000 – \$25,000. Two-year, larger-scale projects will be eligible for grants \$10,000 – \$40,000. **We anticipate the average grant award will be \$20,000 – \$25,000.**

MATCH

A **minimum 1:1 match** of cash or in-kind/contributed goods and services to funds requested is expected. The ratio of matching funds offered by the applicant is one criterion considered during the review process. All potential sources of match, including cash contributions and dollar equivalent value of in-kind goods and services (including volunteer services) should be listed on the application.

To be eligible, matching contributions must be raised and dedicated specifically for the project, and be voluntary in nature (mitigation, restitution, or other permit or court-ordered settlements are ineligible).

RESTRICTIONS

Grant funds **may not** be used for political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying or litigation activities or to support projects resulting from legal requirements (e.g., permit conditions, mitigation, settlement agreements). However, grant funds **may** be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

GRANT GUIDELINES

- **Applicants must fully address all three key elements** of a Five Star Project discussed above. (e.g., projects involving **only** research, monitoring, planning, or restoration; or projects involving **only** environmental education or outreach will automatically be ineligible).
- **Grant requests must be for \$10,000 – \$40,000.**
- **Projects should be completed within one to two years of award.**
- **Partnerships must include at least five organizations (“Five Stars”)** that contribute to project success through funding, land, workforce support, technical support and/or other in-kind services.

Partnerships often include a variety of public and private entities, such as:

- ✓ **Government agencies:** State, local, federal and/or tribal governments and agencies
- ✓ **Youth groups:** schools, youth conservation corps, Scout troops, civic and environmental clubs, etc.
- ✓ **Colleges and Universities:** academia, departments, and local cooperative extension districts
- ✓ **Resource Conservation and Development Councils, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts**
- ✓ **Conservation Organizations**

- ✓ **Businesses or Corporations**
- ✓ **Local citizens and community groups**
- ✓ **Technical and design experts:** local environmental and restoration consultants, landscape architects, environmental planners, and others that offer technical and design expertise
- ✓ **Foundations** or other funders
- Proposals seeking **larger grants** (i.e., >\$25,000) are expected to demonstrate greater matching contributions, a larger number of project partners, and more significant ecological and educational objectives.
- Grant funds **may not** be used to cover indirect costs **unless** they meet **both** of the following conditions:
 - ✓ The grantee organization has a federally-approved indirect rate; and
 - ✓ Indirect costs do not exceed 15% of the total grant request (even when the federally-approved rate is greater than 15%).
- Organizations or projects that have received funding under this program are eligible to reapply; however, preference may be given to those that previously have not received support.
- To receive consideration for **FedEx funding**, projects in the 12 targeted cities must include a **Spring Community Service Day** in which FedEx employees may participate in a restoration project (e.g., planting trees or native plants, removing invasive plants, removing trash from urban waterways, installing rain gardens, etc.).

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Highest priority will be given to projects that:

- Describe how the project implements, or is complementary to, an established conservation and/or watershed management plan.
- Clearly and specifically describe how the project will help meet ecological and conservation needs of priority species and habitats in priority watersheds.
- Provide measurable and meaningful conservation outcomes (and relate them to formal conservation plans if applicable).
- Include diverse partners (i.e., broad range of partner types) from both the public and private sectors.
- Build new, or enhance existing, partnerships (and explain the significance). For projects that address a formal conservation or watershed management plan: the agency or organization that developed the plan is a partner in – or at least is supportive of – the project.
- Demonstrate the use of education, training, and public outreach in shaping and sustaining human behavior towards the conservation goals. Proposed activities should be highly collaborative, address strategic conservation needs, and be broadly applicable/easily transferable.

SUBMISSION

The Five Star Online Application will be live and accessible in **Easygrants** on December 16. When you are ready to begin the application process, go to www.nfwf.org/Easygrants.

If you are a new user to Easygrants, first you will need to register by clicking on “**Register here**” and enter your applicant information. Once you are registered, select “**Five Star 2011**” from the list of programs and follow the instructions.

If you already are registered in Easygrants, login using your e-mail address and password and then select “***Start a New Application***”. After you have started the application process, you may save your application in progress and return another time to complete and submit it.

DEADLINE

Applications must be submitted online in Easygrants by **midnight EST, Monday, February 14.**

TIMELINE

- **Thursday, December 16 (2:00 - 3:30 p.m. EST)** **Webinar for Potential Applicants**
- **Monday, February 14 (midnight EST)** **Proposals due via Easygrants**
- **June 2011** **Anticipated awards announcement**

ASSISTANCE WITH APPLICATIONS

There will be a webinar for applicants on Thursday, December 16, at 2:00-3:30 p.m. EST. The webinar will review the RFP and provide an overview and walk-through of EasyGrants. First time applicants and anyone with questions about the RFP are strongly encouraged to participate in the webinar. (*Follow the registration instructions at: www.nfwf.org/FiveStar.*) A recording of the webinar will be posted online for those who cannot make the Dec. 16 date.

CONTACTS

For questions not addressed in the RFP or webinar, please contact the following individuals:

Carrie Clingan
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National Association of Counties
(202) 942-4246

Claire Thorp (Mid-West and Western states)
claire.thorp@nfwf.org
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
(415) 243-3104

Douglas Stephens
dstephens@wildlifehc.org
Wildlife Habitat Council
301-588-8994

Amanda Bassow (Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast)
amanda.bassow@nfwf.org
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
(202) 595-2476

For more information on the Five Star Restoration Program, please visit NFWF’s Five Star website at www.nfwf.org/FiveStar, or EPA’s Five Star website at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/restore/5star.

Five Star Easygrants HelpSheet

(This help sheet refers sequentially to each section and field in Easygrants required for this program.)

PROJECT INFORMATION

- **Grant Amount Being Requested from NFWF:** Minimum is \$10,000. Maximum is \$40,000.
- **Matching Contributions Proposed:** A *minimum 1:1 match* of cash or in-kind/contributed goods and services to funds requested is expected. Enter the total matching contributions anticipated.
- **Projected Grant Start Date:** Projects should begin between July and December 2011.
- **Projected Grant End Date:** Projects should be completed within one to two years of the start date.
- **Project Title/Name:** Please do not call your project “Five Star Restoration Project”. Give it a short, descriptive name that will uniquely identify it and distinguish it from the competition. (60 character limit)
- **Project Description:** This two sentence project summary should use the first sentence to describe what your project will achieve and the second sentence to describe what is special about your project. (200 character limit)
- **Project Abstract:** Provide an overview of your project, including measurable outcomes (i.e., specify acres or linear feet to be restored plus any education or partnership capacity outcomes anticipated); proposed activities; and identify all partner organizations that are participating in the project. (1500 character limit)
- **Keyword(s):** You must select at least one Keyword. You are encouraged to use the “*Help*” feature in Easygrants to identify Keywords. Most applicants’ Keywords will include: Conservation Action, Conservation Threat, and Major Habitat Type.
- **Sub-keyword(s):** You also must select at least one Sub-keyword. You are encouraged to use the “*Help*” feature in Easygrants to review definitions of Sub-keywords. Most applicants will select at least one of the following Sub-keywords:
 - *Under Major Habitat Type:* Freshwater – Wetland; Freshwater – Rivers, lakes and streams and riparian zone; Coastal – Estuaries and Bays; Coastal – Coastal beaches, dunes and shoreline
 - *Under Conservation Threats:* Residential & Commercial Development; Agriculture & Aquaculture; Human Intrusions & Disturbance; Natural System Modifications; Invasive & Other Problematic Species & Genes; Pollution
 - *Under Conservation Actions:* Land/Water Management; Education & Awareness

PROJECT LOCATION

- **Project Location Country(ies):** Select “*North America – United States*” from the drop-down menu.
- **Project Location State/Province:** Please select all states and territories that apply.
- **Project Location U.S. Congressional District(s):** Please select all U.S. Congressional Districts in which the proposed project will take place.
- **Project Location Description:** Please include the county/city where the project will occur as well as the most appropriate scale of watershed. *Longitude and latitude are especially helpful.* (200 character limit)

ACTIVITIES and METRICS

- **FOR EACH MAJOR ACTIVITY:** List the “*Proposed Activity*” and then select a “*Metric*” from the drop down list. If the list does not include a metric appropriate for the activity, you also may enter a new metric; however, we ask that wherever possible you use the metrics provided so that we may standardize our data collection. Then for each metric, provide the “*Value at Grant Completion*” which should be the gains attributable to the project at the end of the grant. After entering one activity, metric and value, click “**add**”. Then repeat these steps until you have provided a metric and value for each major activity.

UPLOADS

- To complete your application, you must upload several files into Easygrants. The most important is your actual proposal narrative. The Five Star Proposal Narrative may be downloaded from Easygrants at any time and completed at your leisure. It must be uploaded back into your Easygrants application before your application may be submitted. The narrative **may not** exceed six (6) pages in total length (including questions which should not be deleted).

Upload	Required or Optional	Notes
Narrative	Required	Template provided. Six-page limit. 11 pt font minimum
Board of Trustees*	Required	Provide a list of members. If your organization is not a nonprofit and does not have a Board, upload a document stating that none exists.
A-133 Audit*	Required	If your organization has not expended over \$500,000 in Federal funds in the last year, upload a statement saying that an A-133 Audit is not required.
GAAP audited financial statements*	Required	If your organization does not have GAAP audited financial statements, you may upload a balance sheet and profit/loss statement.
IRS Form 990*	Required	If your organization is not a nonprofit, upload a document stating that a Form 990 is not required.
Statement of Litigation	Required	Template provided.
Letters of Support	Optional	Recommended from significant partners, especially those providing matching contributions.
Map of project site	Optional	Strongly recommended for restoration projects.
Photos	Optional	Compress photos to minimize file size.

****If your organization has recently applied to NFWF for a grant and this information already is on file and up to date, they will not appear to you as required uploads in EasyGrants.***

BUDGET

- This section provides budget detail for the “**Grant Amount Being Requested from NFWF.**” It should **not** include matching funds.
- Please note that no part of the budget (neither NFWF funds nor match) may include: general administrative overhead, indirect costs, contingencies or miscellaneous costs; advocacy/lobbying; fundraising; litigation; terrorist activities; nor activities in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

- List each source of matching contributions separately in the space provided. Matching contributions may include both cash and in-kind contributions. It is our expectation that each of the five partners listed in the proposal narrative will be providing some form of cash or in-kind matching contribution.
- Please note the restrictions on use of matching funds above. Regarding indirect: if your organization has a Federally-negotiated indirect rate, which, when applied to this project would exceed the NFWF cap of 15%, any difference may count as a matching contribution (i.e., “foregone indirect”).
- The total of all line items entered in this section must equal **EXACTLY** the total “**Matching Contributions Proposed**” in the **PROJECT INFORMATION** section.

PERMITS and APPROVALS

- If Permits and/or Approvals are required for this project, please list all permits and/or approvals required and their status.

REVIEW AND SUBMIT

- When you are ready to submit, each section of your proposal should be indicated “**Complete**” with a green check mark in the “**Status**” column. If any section is indicated “**Incomplete**” with a red “**X**”, you will not be able to submit and must go back and check your work in each section that is “**Incomplete**”.
- To view and save your proposal you may click on the “**View PDF**” button. This function creates a composite file with all of the fields and uploads, which can be saved as a stand-alone document. Please note that the “**Applicant-identified Reviewer Information**” section will appear empty in your submission because it is not required for this program.



Five Star Restoration Program Full-proposal Project Narrative

Instructions: Save this document on your computer and complete the narrative in the format provided; allow one to two paragraphs for each answer; and **use a minimum of 11pt font** for your response. The final narrative should not exceed six (6) pages; do not delete the text provided below. Upload completed document as a PDF or MS Word file into the on-line application as instructed.

Strategic Context:

1. Describe how the project implements or is complementary to an established **conservation and/or watershed management plan**.
2. Specifically describe how the project will help meet **ecological and conservation needs** of priority species and habitats in priority watersheds.
3. Describe the **measurable goals** (ecological; educational/outreach; and partnership/community capacity) you expect to achieve through this project. How does this project further your organization's mission and/or partnership's goals?

Restoration Objectives:

1. What specific **ecological objectives** do you hope to achieve through this project?
2. What specific on-the-ground **restoration activities** will be undertaken?
3. What **quantitative and qualitative indicators** will you use to measure progress toward your ecological objectives?
4. What is your **long-term maintenance and monitoring** plan to sustain your restoration work?

Educational Objectives:

1. What specific **educational and/or outreach objectives** do you hope to achieve through this project?
2. Who are your **target audiences**?
3. What specific **educational/outreach activities** will be undertaken?
4. What **quantitative and qualitative indicators** will you use to measure progress toward your educational/outreach objectives?
(*Number of children engaged in program, pre- and post- test scores on ecological awareness, etc.*)
5. Describe how you will **evaluate success** in demonstrating a clear correlation between targeted audience behavioral changes and resulting impact on ecological/conservation target.

Partnership Capacity Objectives:

1. Briefly describe how your project is **building new, or enhancing/expanding existing partnerships/relationships**, then complete table for all involved (add rows as needed).

	<i>Partner</i>	<i>Area of Expertise</i>	<i>Contribution(s) to the project</i>	<i>Dollar Value of Contribution(s)*</i>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

(NOTE: your project must have at least five partners and the equivalent dollar value of their contributions should be reflected in the "matching contributions" section of your proposal.)

2. Describe your partnership's **long-term commitment** to building community capacity to enhance and sustain your local natural resources.
3. To be considered for funding within one of the **FedEx EarthSmart Outreach** cities (see RFP under 'Geographic Focus and Funding Availability'), please describe the community service event you will host for FedEx employees.