



SKI CONSERVATION FUND

Funding Criteria

The NFF will accept applications from nonprofit organizations working on or adjacent to the National Forest to implement action-oriented on-the-ground conservation projects and citizen-based monitoring projects that lead to implementation. All grants awarded through the SCF require a documented minimum match of 50% of the total award value in nonfederal cash or in-kind contributions. Weighted advantage will be given to proposals that leverage significant additional financial resources.

Programmatic Emphases

The NFF suggests organizations position their proposed projects into at least one of the four NFF programmatic emphasis areas. These areas are Recreation, Wildlife Habitat Improvement, Community-Based Forestry and Watershed Health and Restoration. Each is briefly described below:

Recreation

Recreation is the fastest growing use of National Forests and Grasslands. The increase in visitor usage and encroaching development results in increased human impacts to ecosystems. Maintaining the integrity of these forest and grassland resources is vital for both ecosystem viability and quality recreational experiences. Through citizen involvement in activities such as trail restoration and maintenance, communities can help ameliorate these pressures. Additionally, through the support of collaborative processes involving multiple interests, communities can work collectively to enhance future recreation experiences.

The SCF will make strategic investments in action-oriented projects that help enhance the experiences of diverse recreation interests through trail maintenance, collaborative processes, site improvement, recreational damage restoration or mitigation, recreation resource inventory and maintenance, and related projects. For recreation projects, priority will be given to projects occurring on sites that receive the highest impact by recreational users.

Wildlife Habitat Improvement

The diverse habitats found within the National Forests and Grasslands support more than 3,000 species of birds, mammals, reptiles, fish, and amphibians. For many Americans, engaging in wildlife viewing, fishing, and hunting within these habitats often serves as the primary means of connection to the outdoors, and provides important revenue for state and local economies.

The SCF will make strategic investments in action-oriented projects that improve conditions for maintaining viable populations of native plants and animals through action-oriented projects.

Community-Based Forestry

The NFF believes that communities can work to improve natural resources, while providing local economic and social benefits. The aim of community-based forestry is to empower those who work, live and recreate in the woods to work together and strive towards a common set of goals.

The SCF will support action-oriented community-based forestry projects, particularly those that focus on forest health and restoration. Projects should address the need for greater collaboration in community-based forestry projects. Local constituencies should be included in the decision-making process through conservation and restoration projects that support economically sustainable natural resource use or address wildfire risk reduction and response.

Watershed Health & Restoration

National Forest lands are the largest single source of fresh water in the United States. The water sources that begin on National Forest lands bring life to agricultural lands and clean water to communities, and are conservatively estimated to be worth at least \$3.7 billion per year. Protecting these watersheds is one of the primary reasons the U.S. Forest Service was established, and maintaining and restoring these watersheds is of vital importance. The patchwork of Federal and non-Federal lands in many watersheds makes public-private partnerships even more crucial to ensuring clean water and vibrant ecosystems.

The SCF will support investment in watershed restoration and enhancement projects, especially those initiatives that include diverse perspectives and address critical issues such as watershed restoration and fish habitat enhancement.

Civic Engagement and Community Involvement

Weighted advantage will be given to projects that show a strong commitment to civic engagement and community involvement through the direct involvement of members of the public and local communities. These projects should have significant, legitimate community involvement or civic engagement in the pre-implementation, implementation, or post-implementation phases. The National Forest Foundation acknowledges that different types of projects provide different opportunities to involve communities. These opportunities typically include, but are not limited to, providing input and developing projects as part of a collaborative group or effort, collecting baseline data or data for pre-project monitoring, involvement in the various phases of project implementation, and post-project effectiveness monitoring. In general, holding informational meetings, providing educational or interpretive

materials, or solely involving a diverse group of *agencies* is insufficient to be eligible for the weighted advantage. To be eligible, the community involvement or civic engagement portion of a project does not necessarily have to occur in the portion or phase of the project for which National Forest Foundation funding is sought, but it should be present in the project as a whole and should be clearly described as noted later in this document.

Additionally, environmental education, kiosks and signage are not program priorities and will only be considered as minor, critical components of larger projects. Organizations that receive an award through the SCF may manage it concurrently with any other ongoing National Forest Foundation conservation award.

Who Should Apply:

Applications will be considered from non-Federal partners, community-based organizations, Native American tribes and other nonprofit organizations doing on-the-ground conservation or citizen-based monitoring on or around the White River National Forest. Nonfederal government entities are eligible for funding as long as the project proposed is predominantly funded by outside, nongovernmental sources.

Who Should Not Apply:

Applications will not be considered from:

- Federal agencies;
- For-profit organizations;
- Consultants;
- Educational and research organizations proposing projects that do not show tangible, on-the-ground benefit;
- Organizations seeking general operating support;
- Organizations seeking funding for litigation or advocacy;
- Organizations that cannot produce a documented minimum 50% non-Federal in-kind or cash match.

Selection Criteria:

Successful projects will support the major strategic initiatives and current priorities of the NFF and the U.S. Forest Service. Priority will be given to action-oriented collaborative projects that proactively address at least one of the programmatic emphasis areas through on-the-ground conservation projects or citizen-based monitoring.

Evaluation will be based on the extent to which a proposed project:

1. Improves the conditions of National Forests and Grasslands in a measurable, hands-on way.
2. Obtains funding from non-federal sources greater than or equal to the amount being requested from the National Forest Foundation.
3. Benefits National Forests and Grasslands. Projects may occur on or around National Forest lands, but must show direct benefit to National Forest System lands.
4. Provides multiple benefits to the resource base.
5. Incorporates community engagement in the pre-implementation, implementation, or post-implementation phases of the project.
6. Has an effective method to share project information and results.
7. Provides sufficient detail to enable the evaluation of the following:
 - Project design;
 - Specific project activities;
 - Anticipated results of the project;
 - Methods for evaluation of effectiveness;
 - Qualifications of the project manager;
 - The ability of the organization to complete the project and match and expend funds as described within one year of the award date.