

Healthy American Forests Initiative - Field Liaison & Applicant Webinar

Transcript

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started transcription

Hi, everyone. Welcome to the Field Liaison Healthy American Forest Initiative Applicant webinar. We're going to give folks a few more minutes to join and then we'll go ahead and get started.

Sam and Amy, can you see my screen with the presentation?

Yep.

All right. Hi, everybody. We're gonna give folks another minute to join here.

And then we'll go ahead and get started. We've got a long presentation for you all, so thank you so much for joining. You hopefully won't find my voice annoying because you're about to hear it for the next hour and a half. So if you do, I apologize. As a quick note, we are recording this session and after the webinar.

We will go ahead and post this presentation along with the PDF version of the slides that we're about to show and then send you all a link to that information. So don't feel like you have to take furious notes during this. We will have an opportunity for you to re-review the webinar on the slides a little bit later.

All right. I think we got a good amount of folks on the call, so we're going to go ahead and get started. So my name is Chelsea Murphy. I am the project manager of the field liaisons who are here representing a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for their Healthy American Forests initiative.

So the call that we're going to have today is going to be a webinar that is led by us, the field liaisons that goes over the HAFI program or again, the Healthy American Forest Initiative. When you get these slides, I just wanted to point out one thing really quickly, which is that there are a bunch of links.

These slides, which you will have access to, they will lead you to pertinent documentation. So if you click on these underlined areas on the presentation, when you have a chance to review it later, you will be able to get those links to this documentation.

All right, so um.

Webinar tips very quickly. As a reminder, just mute yourself when not speaking. We will be using the chat function, which you can find at the very top of your team's page, the little chat bubble. We'll be using that to ask questions. We did receive some questions ahead of time, so thank you to those of you who.

Gave us questions ahead of time, which we'll address at the end of the presentation. But if we're flipping through slides and a question occurs to write it down in the chat and then Sam and Amy will help collate those questions for the end of the presentation where we'll

go ahead and answer those.

Those we've well, I thought we were going to hide participant names, but it looks like that they're all there so you can all see each other. I think we attempted to do that. It didn't work. But if you are looking for potential partnerships under this program, please reach out to the field liaison team.

And ask about potential partnerships. We may be able to connect you all if we know that there are other organizations that are interested in doing similar work in similar forest units. So happy to help provide that information to you all after the webinar today.

And then again, at the end of the webinar will be our time for questions and answers. So if you have a question, please raise your hand at the end and we'll call on you to ask that question if you haven't had a chance to put it in the chat yet.

OK, so why are we here? So this webinar is a follow up to the NFWF 2025 applicant webinar that occurred on October 17th. If you all have not seen that or were unable to participate, I have a link here on the slide. I highly recommend you go back and listen to their webinar. In addition to attending this one, we are not going to go through all of the ins and outs of, let's say, easy grants and exactly how to apply to the program. This webinar is more geared towards giving you all pertinent information on how to write a compelling proposal. This webinar also gives you all the chance to ask live questions and ask questions in the chat, which I know the NFWF webinar did not allow for that. So we want to make sure that we have some good interaction with potential applicants.

Yes, we can go ahead and do that. Amy or Sam, can you put that in the chat for us? Thank you.

All right, so today's agenda. Like I had said, we are going to do a quick refresher of what NFWF said during their webinar. However, we're really going to focus in on the application do's and don'ts and tips for success on how to write a compelling narrative and.

Provide a complete application package under this HAFI program.

OK. So who are we? Great question. So I'm Chelsea Murphy. I am the project manager for the field liaison group. The field liaison group consists of myself, Sam and Amy, who are both on the call today, as well as other liaison staff with ECT, which.

Is the organization that we're with. We are a direct contractor to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation under their National Programs group. We are really here to help you all as applicants better understand the HAFI program.

Help you submit more compelling and competitive applications. We're also here to help you workshop your project ideas and grow maybe some projects that you've had funded under various NFWF programs before or other funding sources before into more of a programmatic approach versus individual.

Individual projects. We will also be providing you all with proposal debriefs. So if you are not awarded a grant under this program, we are also available to help you go through why you are not awarded, which is really invaluable information for all of us that write grants to be able to have those lessons learned.

For the next time you submit an application, when the projects get funded, we are also here, so we don't go away during just the application stage. We will be here with you throughout your project. If you are funded under this program, we will be there to help you provide

administrative support. So if you have.

Questions on how to submit a reimbursement request, right? We can help you with that. If you need a scope change, we can help you with that. We can also help provide some Technical Support on funded projects. So if you need to speak with a cultural resources person and you don't have one on staff, we have them on staff and we can help provide you some of that technical information.

So what we don't do is we don't write your proposals for you as nice as that would be. I'm sure you'd all appreciate that. We don't actually do that piece and we don't provide full reviews and comments on applications. What we will do, however, is have one-on-one conversations with you all and I will show you a way.

In which to reach us in a later slide. But if you want to have a one-on-one conversation with us to go over a section of your application, if you have questions about verbiage, if you don't feel like you are tying your project back to the program priorities, for instance, we can help you with all of that, so we can work.

Shop some of that with you live, but what we won't do is give you an early review of your full application and then we won't actually do all your technical work for you. But again, we can provide guidance and support.

OK, so quick overview of the HAFI program. So this is a one time national NFWF program and it is funded by the USDA Forest Service. It is really here to help support watershed restoration and vegetation management projects.

The National Forest System lands. The program at large is going to promote healthy forests. It's going to help reduce wildfire risk and strengthen timber production. In addition, the program is geared towards helping with community safety from wildfires, ecosystem resilience.

And provide economic benefits through job creation.

So here's just a quick few basics. We are the program is really geared towards the eligible applicants being non-profit, so 501 C's state and government, state government agencies, local governments.

Tribal governments and tribal organizations, as well as higher Ed. So educational institutions who cannot apply are federal agencies, businesses, international organizations and individuals.

1015 awards are expected, but it's really going to depend on what the applicant pool looks like on exactly the number of awards. The award size varies quite dramatically, so between 250K to about \$2,000,000 per award. So there's a higher upper limit on this grant funding source.

One of the caveats that I know a lot of people have a lot of questions about or concerns about was the maximum period of performance. This is a two-year grant, so the your project must end by May 30th, 2028.

With the awards coming in 2026, so that gives you two years to complete your project. We will go over a little bit later in this presentation some ideas on maybe how to make that work. I know it's a really tight time frame, especially since we are in a government shutdown.

This is gonna feel like a really tight timeline, but there are some things that we can look at in

terms of amending scopes to make sure that you fit within that two year time period. Match there is match required on this grant. It is a 20% non federal match or a 25% of the NFWFRA request. So there's been some questions about what that means. It is a little bit confusing. The way that it works out is that if you look at.

The what you're requesting from NFWF with as the not your total projects amount, but just the project, the amount that you're going to need from them. So that doesn't necessarily count your match. That's why that's a higher percentage than if you were to look at non federal match at a project level.

As a whole, because that's going to consider both the funding requests from NFWF as well as the match that you need to provide, which is why you have those kind of different percentages. If you need a little bit more clarification on that or you want to look at some hard numbers, please let us know. We can work through that with you.

One last thing on a kind of a grant basics here is that the primary focus of this program is to fund implementation projects. So planning, solely planning projects, so projects that are just engineering and design, just outreach and education, those are not going to be eligible for this program.

A combination of both is OK. So I know for those of you that have been doing this type of grant work for a long time, the funders have moved a little bit away from these combined types of projects, these implementation and planning projects combined this program. That's OK. So there will be expected some planning at the beginning of your project, but just make sure the main focus of your project is implementation.

So geographic focus.

The all projects must occur on National Forest Service lands. They cannot be adjacent to Forest Service lands. They actually have to be on Forest Service property. There is a QR code here that will lead you to this Arc GIS map, which I have shown on the right. This map is a map of.

The forest and grasslands that the Forest Service manages in 43 states, including the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. If you are unsure if your projects will occur on National Forest System lands, please visit this interactive map and take a look at your project area.

OK, priorities.

These are the program priorities that you must tie your project back to. You do not have to tie your project back to all of these priorities. Your project just needs to meet a few of them. Typically, reviewers like to see you matching your project to 2:00 to 3:00.

Priorities, but not all six. Something that is going to be really important for you to remember as you're writing your application is you want to make sure that you're specific on how your project meets. Again, some, not all of these priorities. This is a running theme throughout this presentation that you all are going to see. There's a lot of hows.

So reviewers don't like to see applications that come in that just check boxes. They want to really see how you tie your project to the problem priorities, to the Forest Service priorities, to various documents that we're going to talk about here in a minute for watershed restoration.

Plans, etc. So make sure to write the how when you're doing your narrative.

Narratives.

Eligible activities. So these are just a few of the eligible activities that this program would like to fund. So vegetation management and fuels reduction. So this can happen through mechanical hand prescribed fire techniques.

Watershed and aquatic habitat restoration. That's a pretty wide-ranging activity, but it can include reconnection of floodplains, erosion control on banks, invasive species removal in the riparian area. It can include aquatic organism passage or AOP barrier removals or replacement of culverts.

Habitat, restoration, et cetera. So it's a pretty wide-ranging activity there. Same with invasive species removal. So that can occur in both the upland and in the in a waters area, in a wetlands, near a stream, et cetera.

And then finally, decommissioning and restoration of unauthorized or temporary roadways. I'm missing a word in there. It's supposed to say roadways in terms of a tip here for your eligible activities.

The more detailed you can be, the better. So you want to provide as much detail about your activities under question seven of the narrative. And we're going to go ahead and go through the narrative question by question a little bit later in the presentation, so you can get a better sense of what this looks like when we get there. But don't just WSPP activities, don't just do a bullet point.

Are going to do prescribed fire, say how many crews, say when you're going to do the prescribed fire. Make sure that you're saying that you're coordinating with the Forest Service on the prescribed fire, etcetera, right? You want to be as detailed as possible to give the reviewers enough information to make a

Educated score on your proposal.

OK, so projects must. These are all the musts that you have to have when you're looking at a project under the HAFI program. So again, I'm going to reiterate, they must be on National Forest System lands, not next to.

You need to tie back to a water source protection plan or a WSPP. And this is this. These whiffs were developed under Section 303 D one of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, which I'm going to go into a little bit more detail on that here in a minute.

Or your project needs to tie back to the Watershed Restoration Action Plan or a WRAP. Again, this is also developed under the FHFRA.

Your project needs to be pre-approved or supported by the National Forest Unit in which the project will be implemented. This is extremely important if you are coming into this webinar and into this application cold, meaning that you haven't spoken to the forest, you haven't been coordinating with them yet.

Do that now. Applicate applicants that apply that have not had have proof of coordination with the Forest Service and approval of the Forest Service to do this work will be scored low and will not be awarded.

You are requested to submit proof from the Forest Service of the court, the coordination that you've been doing and their support. We recognize that's really difficult right now with the government shutdown.

When we say proof of support, the language in the RFP and in the NFWF webinar specifically refers to letters of support. That might not be possible right now. An e-mail

would suffice. So if you have an e-mail that is from the Forest Service representative that you've been.

Been working with that will suffice, so just make sure that you're doing early coordination on your project before you apply to this program.

OK, WISPs and WRAPs. This was kind of new to me. So if you are feeling like you don't know what these are, that's fine. It is not. These are not exactly well-known documents with the Forest Service, and they're actually hard to find documents, which I'm going to play you a video here in a few minutes where I walked.

Walk you through where you might want to go to find a WRAP. In particular, WISPs are a little bit more difficult to find online. So really quick WRAPs are programmatic documents where the forest describes the conditions of the existing resources.

And then identifies the management actions that the force would like to employ to get towards a desired future condition. So they're looking at resources that are impaired and working on strategies on how to restore or restore.

The functionality of watershed, of a forest, etcetera. Wisps are a little bit more nebulous and they are really there to identify potential threats to drinking water sources, so streams, groundwater, rivers, etcetera, and look at protecting water quality.

Through management activities, so watershed restoration, different types of management activities and then voluntary public private partnerships.

OK, so there are some resources in which you can find and identify RAPs and WISPs.

Number one, RAPs are way easier to find online than WISPs. The best way to find both is to contact your Forest Service representative.

This is going to be echoed multiple times in this presentation. Coordinate with them early.

Ask these questions. The forest that you're working with will likely have the most up-to-date versions or know if any WRAPs or WISPs are being created now or being written now.

That is not documented anywhere online. You are allowed to apply for this program if there is a WRAP or a WSPPP that is being created and will be completed and published before the end of your period of performance. So there may be some instances where some forests and some water.

Sheds are working on these documents, but we don't know of them unless you talk to your Forest Service representative. Um.

There I'm gonna play a video. It's about 5 or 6 minutes I believe coming up. Let me see if I can pull this up. I might need to.

Let's see here. Oh.

Here we go. OK. So can you all hear that? Sam, Amy, could you hear that through the teams? I did not hear the video play.

You can't hear that.

Not on my end. No. OK, sorry folks, give me one second. Let me see if I can get the audio to play.

If not, I can just narrate and then you will have it as a recording later.

Yeah, that's OK. I don't think I'm gonna be able to get this to work and I don't want to waste everybody's time, so that's fine. I'm just gonna narrate as the video is playing. So what you see on your screen now is the Forest Service website for the watershed condition.

Framework on this is the interactive map that is going to be extremely helpful to you all when you're trying to identify if the forest and the unit that you're looking at working in has a WRAP associated with it. So that is where we are here. I'm going to go ahead and click down on the interactive map.

Below, this is going to take us to an ArcGIS viewer and landing page.

Here and then you're going to click on that middle tab on this landing page and this is going to take you to the map viewer. So the map viewer is going to show you a map of the United States with some pretty colors on it and.

What this shows is areas in which the forests have completed their condition assessments for these different watersheds. The ArcGIS Mapper has some good functionality to it, so if you need to search for your exact forest or location, you can do so in that search bar.

There's also some selection features as well as an ability to change your base map or to change and toggle off layers on the map. And then there is the legend, which I'm going to click open now. So when you zoom in on the map and I'm going to zoom in to New Mexico here, when you zoom into the map.

What this shows you is those areas of the forests service land system lands that have gone under this watershed condition classification, and the colors indicate whether or not the watershed is functioning properly, if it's functioning at risk, or if it has an impaired function.

There are also these symbols on the map, so the stars and the check marks that you can see here, and when you zoom in you can actually see the boundaries of all the watersheds.

These check marks and stars indicate priority watersheds, the priority watersheds.

Have WRAPs typically associated with them. The non-priority watersheds do not necessarily. And again, this is where it becomes really important that you're talking to your Forest Service representative to figure out if there is a WRAP or a WSPP in the watershed and then the forest that you're looking at.

So you can get more information about the forest or the watersheds by one of two ways, and I'm going to show you here in a second. One is by actually going and clicking on the watershed of interest. And again, we're really focused in on those priority watershed areas, so the areas with the stars and the checking marks.

Or you can open up the viewer at the bottom, so see if the video is going to catch up here.

I will eventually click on something. I promise I did this last night. OK, here we go. So if you scroll over to the different watersheds, you can click on the watersheds themselves and it'll pop up a box with information about the watershed.

I'm going to go ahead and do that here. So these boxes have general information about what the what forest the water, the party watershed is in, and then information about the watershed itself, including general information like area, etcetera. And it also will tell you if. If the WRAP that's associated with it, is that a regional extent, so the whole forest or if it's really just a watershed based WRAP. So you can see the watershed names there and then you can tell what the watershed condition is, whether it's functioning properly at risk or impaired.

As you Scroll down, you can see their assessments of various parts of the watersheds, the soil conditions, etcetera. And then if you get all the way down to the bottom, you're gonna want to Scroll down the bottom, you'll see a selection narrative. This section usually gives

you more information as to why the forest classified.

The watershed in this condition and a little bit more background about maybe the species in the watershed, issues of concern, etcetera. If you can continue to Scroll down to the very, very end, you will see if there is a WRAP associated with this watershed and the name of the WRAP.

This is really important because as part of your application, you're going to need to download and provide the WRAP as part of your downloads if you have that ability. Now, if you go down to the very bottom of the mapper when you're using this, there's an attribute table which I'm going to click Open now.

That attribute table has the similar information that you saw on those pop-out boxes, except for one nice feature here. So if you scroll all the way over to the right, you will see if there is an attachment associated with those priority watersheds that we see on the screen here. So you can see that.

If there's an attachment, these attachments are typically the WRAP itself, so this will be the document that you need to download and attach to your application. Now, not all priority watersheds will have this attachment. Unfortunately, you will at a bare minimum be able to get the name of the WRAP if there's a WRAP associated with that watershed.

And then you can contact your for service representative to see if you can get a copy or a link. If you can't before the your application is due, which is in January, I would highly recommend that what you do is name the WRAP and then let NFWF and the reviewers know that you were in the process of getting a copy and that will be.

Be provided at the time of award. There is an understanding that there's a government shutdown right now, and so getting some of this information may be difficult. So I'm going to go ahead and open up here in a second one of the files so that you can see what the WRAP looks like. So if you click on the attachment itself, it should open up.

Up a pop-up window that then goes over the act, the watershed restoration action plan. So just a real quick, if you guys have not seen these before, I'm going to give you a really quick overview. So really the plans, there's the plans all look generally the same or maybe a little bit different, but we'll have.

The same information in it. This is the newer WRAP 2024. There are some WRAPs on here that date back all the way to 2011, so they're a little bit older. They look a little bit different, but they have generally the same info. So they will discuss the watershed characterization, give a background of the watershed, the size.

Some general information, talk about some land use and then we're going to Scroll down here. They will also go over some key watershed issues and why those issues or those indicators were rated in the way that they were by the Forest Service.

But where you guys are really going to want to pay attention is towards the end of the document. So if you get down towards the end of the document, this is where the forest has laid out particular projects, objectives and issues that they would like solved and the types of solutions that would be applicable to solve those.

Problems. So this is really where you want to pay attention and you want in your narrative to make sure that you tie back your activities and the work that you're doing in your project back to these WRAPs and WISPs to say that you have looked at them so that the reviewers

know that you are familiar with what you are agreeing to by doing this.

This project that associates with these documents, and you can also get more specific to say that you know, perhaps your project is an exact duplicate of what the forest has recommended as a potential solution to some of their challenges in this watershed. So you know, I think it's fine if you rip off and duplicate some of.

These as long as you are coordinating with your Forest Service representative and ensure that this is still a priority project for them and that this project hasn't already been completed, right? So this might be a really good resource for you to look into some project ideas if you don't have any readily available off the top of your head.

So I apologize if the video sound didn't work, but when you see the recording, hopefully it will work then.

OK, so a few notes on WISPs and WRAPs. It's important to note that the entire project does not have to fall within the boundary. It does have to be on the forest system land, so I'm going to repeat that, but it doesn't have to necessarily have to be the exact same boundary. As the WSPP for the WRAP, but it does have to overlap, so keep that in mind. It needs to be active. So these documents need to be active. They should not be completed, meaning that all the projects that are laid out in these WRAPs and WISPs should not have been already completed or all of the issues within that watershed resolved. You want to make sure that they are still.

Active and restoration is still needed in this area. I know I said this before, but I'm I think it's worth repeating that if the Forest Service is in process of writing one of these documents, which again you're not going to know unless you talk to your Forest Service representative, then you can apply to the program but.

You need to state in your narrative application that these documents are in process, that you're coordinating with the Forest Service, and that you reasonably believe that it will be completed by the end of the project. Now, there's no way to know how fast the forest can move, and if you have worked with the Forest Service in the past, you know that.

They don't always move very quickly, so there is no guarantee that these are going to get done by the end of your project. You just need to pass the red face test and say that you reasonably believe it will be completed by the end of the project.

OK, so a couple of important dates here. Number one, this application is due January 13th, 2026 by before midnight Eastern Time in easy grants. For those of you who've had NFF grants before, you know that easy grants is a misnomer. It is not an easy system necessarily. Early to use, I highly recommend that you all plan on uploading and getting your applications submitted a day or two before this deadline. There have been instances in the past where NFWF applications have actually crashed Easy Grants.

You can't. Then other applicants can't upload and it becomes very, very stressful very, very quickly if you're trying to upload things at the last minute and the system isn't working. So highly recommend submitting a little bit early if you can. The reviews are going to start mid-january and.

Go through May 2026 and then in May 26 the awards will be announced and in June through August they'll be contracting. So a quick tip here, do not set the start date.

Of your project at May 2026 if you're just beginning a project. So I'm going to explain what I

mean by that. What I mean is that if you have an existing NFWF grant per se that you want to build off of it, that's a Forest Service grant and you want to be able to count match and the work that you're doing prior to when you receive the new.

funding from the HAFI program, then you can set your period of performance earlier. The period of performance, you can start the set date and the earliest date that you can set for your period of performance if you want to back count matching activities that are occurring before you receive this funding would be August 31st.

1st 2023 So there is an ability there to be able to count the work that's happening prior to getting this funding.

However, if you were just starting out and you're starting a new project, we never recommend that you set your start date when NFWF says that you're going to get your award because that award announcement of mid to late May just says that you will get a call from NFWF that says you've been awarded. There is a lot of contracting.

And negotiation that has to happen between then and when you actually start your project. So please make sure that you don't set your start date in May because you likely will not actually be starting that then unless you have some match that you would like to count.

For the project.

OK. We're going to talk a little bit about environmental compliance and permitting. This is something that can be a little confusing for grantees. This is something that I think grantees don't think about a lot or applicants don't think about a lot when they're applying for the program. I think most of us that write grants are really.

Focused on our activities, our metrics and outcomes, and the thinking through environmental compliance and permitting for your product doesn't usually happen until later. For this program, for HAFI, you need to think about it at the beginning. So when you are applying to the program, have environmental compliance and permitting that's top of mind.

So because the this funding source is coming from the Forest Service, which is federal funding, that equals a federal action, meaning that the federal compliance from the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act.

And the National Historic Preservation Act.

Come into play, so your projects need to comply with at a minimum these three regulations. Your project may also be subject to the Clean Water Act if you're proposing in water work. So if you are awarded, you cannot begin ground deserving work until your compliance approval is recorded by NFWF. This is extremely important.

This may affect how you what your activities look like and when your start date is. So you if you have some planning that you need to do ahead of time, make sure that is discussed with NFWF.

At your award to say we've got some planning works to do, it's gonna be non ground disturbing work. We would like to get started on that. First you can get what is called partial approval which means that NFWFW from the Forest Service have agreed that you can do planning work which is non ground disturbing activity. And So what I mean by that is desktop work.

Biological cultural resource surveys that don't involve vegetation cutting or digging holes. It

can be community engagement, it could be meeting with stakeholders, etcetera. You can get that work done while your project is proceeding through the approval process for the implementation portion.

The program does have an environmental compliance liaison or contractor. So we are the field liaisons. This is an important difference. Well, we can answer questions about environmental compliance and we're happy to do so. There is another contractor involved in the program.

SWCA Environmental Consultants, they are the ones that are responsible for helping grantees when you get the award, go through that approvals process with NFWF and the Forest Service. So if you have questions and you're thinking about environmental compliance and permitting, which we're highly.

Recommending you do now and if you have questions and you want to talk to us, you can reach out to us as the field liaisons and you can also reach out to SWCA and they should be able to give you a little bit more information.

So one more slide talking about compliance here. OK, so most projects under the HAFI program are going to be approved via a categorical exclusion.

This is the least intensive NEPA process. Sometimes an environmental assessment may be required if there are extenuating circumstances related to your activities and your impacts on resources. So if you would like to get a little bit more information.

About the NEPA compliance, we have on the screen a link to the Forest Service website about NEPA. You can look there. For those of you who have worked with the Forest Service in the past likely know that many of the activities that you're looking at.

Proposing that are going to occur on Forest Service or forest system lands are already covered by some sort of NEPA documentation, which is already explored the impacts to endangered species and cultural resources as well as other resources.

So the easiest path to compliance under this program is to find already existing Forest Service compliance approved documents through a decision memo that state that the similar activities that have been approved.

Match the activities that you want to do on your project, right? So for example, an approved forest wide fuel break maintenance strategy, which some forests have, they may include activities that mirror your proposed project, right? Like forest thinning by mechanics or hand means, maybe some herbicide application, maybe the prescribed burning, right? So you could find that and the decision memo. You can find that online or again speak to your Forest Service representative and you can submit that decision memo, which is the approval document to NFWF through SWM.

SWCA once you're awarded, um and at that point the program for a service representative for the HAFI program will give approval to NFWF. Then NFWF would give you all approval to proceed with your implementation. So I know there's a lot of information that is not exactly relevant.

The application stage, but it is something that you all should be thinking about and planning for in the application stage, knowing that you're going to have to comply if you're awarded. If the compliance documentation does not already exist, so you can't find a decision memo that mirrors the types of activities that you want to do. If you talk to the forest and they say,

hey, look, what you're doing is a little bit outside what we've already approved in other NEPA documents or other programmatic documents with the forest.

Discuss your proposed activities with the Forest Service and if they think that the project can fit under a categorical exclusion, then you will work with SWCA when you are awarded to give them all the relevant information about your project so that they the environment.

Compliance Liaison group can help you get through a Categorical Exclusion (CE), NHPA coordination and ESA coordination. So that documentation will typically look like a shapefile map of your project boundary, a detailed description of your work activities.

Any survey data that you may have and then from this information they'll be able to determine the impacts to the potentially occurring T&E species on your site and outline avoidance and minimization measures for you. So that may look like you know, don't construct during nesting bird season, it may look like don't construct.

During bat roosting season, etcetera, right. They'll also be able to complete a NEPA checklist for a categorical exclusion for you, and then they will work with you or the Forest Service on the National Historic Preservation Act compliance, which is cultural and tribal consultation. Which will need to occur. A lot of times Forest Service units will want to do that consultation themselves and so they will reach out to the State Historic Preservation Office or Shippo or the tribes to give them notice and proceed with consultation.

If you do not think that your, if you think that your project is going to have impacts on some resources, if you're not sure if your project is going to fit under a categorical exclusion, reach out to us and to SWCA and then also think about the potential of an environment. Environmental Assessment. These are a little bit more hefty documents. They do take some time and they take budget. So if you think that you're going to need an EA or if your Forest Service representative is indicating that you may need an EA, then you should reach out to the planning folks at the forest unit that you're.

Looking at working in and ask if they would like to complete that documentation internally or if a third party should be hired. The reason that this matters is it's going to matter for your budget and it's going to matter for your schedule. So if you.

Are going to be responsible for completing this documentation. Make sure to budget.

That into your application and make sure to include that on your timeline. So again, make sure to do all this early. I know this sounds like a lot, but you need to think through this when you're applying so that you don't get caught in a situation where you get an award and don't have enough time or enough money to get through the environmental compliance that's needed.

And then you can't proceed with your projects.

One more tip, some activities such as widespread or aerial herbicide application may be more difficult to approve. So when you're thinking about your project, think about the type of work that you want done and where it's occurring on the landscape. So are you looking at doing?

Herbicide application near a water body that might be harder to approve than herbicide application in the upland environment where you don't have waters or you don't have T&E species issues. Projects do get approval to do aerial herbicide application for instance, but it takes a little bit longer and you need a lot more.

Detail on your methodology and exactly where you're going to be spraying in order to get that approval. O these are some things to think about when you're coming U with your project scoe of work.

OK, quick review of the application review process. The big takeaways here is that there is going to be a minimum of three reviewers on every proposal. So the reviewers typically on every proposal come from the NFWF.

Program staff, so the national program staff, other NFWF staff, just generally field liaisons, which are us Forest Service staff and then sometimes third party reviewers.

Once the reviews are completed, NFWF with program staff will discuss the ranking and the projects with the Forest Service, and then the final funding decisions are going to be based not just on the proposal scoring, but also on other contributing factors such as the geographic distribution of all the projects.

That scored highly the variety of HAFI program priorities addressed and the applicants performance on prior or current NFWF grants. If you all have that, that does come into play the proposed projects then.

Will need to be approved by the NFWF board before awards are announced. This block on the right here with the conservation outcomes, technical merit, partnership and community impact and budget. These are the four areas that we as reviewers look at when we're reviewing predominantly your narrative. The narrative is really the.

Heart and soul of your application. That's where we spend our most time reviewing. And then the bullets to the right of each of these are really what we ask ourselves when we review. So does the projects that you proposed align with the goals, program goals and priorities?

Did you provide quantifiable metrics? Is your project sound and feasible? Do we actually think that we're going to be able to get the work done and the timeline you requested as well as the budget that you requested? Do you have the right people involved? Do you have the technical knowledge to get this project done? Those are the things that we ask.

Ask ourselves when we review your applications.

OK, some do's and don'ts. So left is do, so make sure that you're eligible. So again, those project musts make sure that your project is working on forest system lands. Make sure that you are in a WRAP or a WSPP, at least partially.

Make sure that you're a knowledgeable organization and make sure that you're looking at all your compliance, your environmental compliance. Clearly align your project with the HAFI program priorities, which we're going to go over here in a second. Provide strong letters of support or again, if you can't get letters of support, ask for an e-mail.

know from the Forest Service representative. Make sure to provide a really clear and itemized budget. I will talk more about budgets here in a few minutes. Define targeted and achievable metrics. Make sure that you introduce your partners and your engagement strategy

in the proposal in a meaningful way. And then if you are going to be uploading other uploads, which you have that option to do in Easy Grants, and I encourage you to do so judiciously, make sure that in your narrative if you need a reviewer to

Look at the other upload section. You tell us exactly what you want us to look at and where

it is. We I we have had experience reviewing other applications where folks upload hundreds of pages of documents and then don't ever mention what these documents are, the purpose of the documents, what they are. We are likely going to get hundreds of applications under.

This program, we are just people. We are not going to read every single word and all of the other uploads, including all the narrative information and everything else. So just make sure that you point us to the relevant information that you've included in the other upload section so that we can.

Take that into account during our review. So a couple don'ts. So again, don't apply if your project is not covered by WRAP or WSPP or is on forest system lands. Don't just check boxes. You're going to want to tell us how. How does your project relate to the program priorities? How are you going to meet your metrics? How are?

Are you going to hit success criteria, right? The how is very important. Don't avoid coordinating with your Forest Service representatives. You need to be coordinating with them now. Oh, don't propose a start date. This should be May 2026.

Unless you need match to count. And then again, we're going to need all the details. So we're going to need as many details as you can possibly fit into 5 pages, which I know sounds absurd and it's very stressful to do, but where you can get as succinct as possible and again provide us that how.

OK, so some tips for a creating a compelling narrative. So again, the narrative is really the bulk of what we're going to be reviewing. There are other uploads. There's the information that you're putting such as the match, your budget. We're looking at all of that, but we always start with the narrative.

Narrative When we review, it is 5 pages. You can adjust the formatting so you can change it to single space. You can adjust the margins. Just remember we're people we're reviewing. Don't make it so crazy that we don't know what we're reading or can't read it because it's so small.

While technically sound proposals are important, remember that the audience isn't always technical experts when who are reviewing your proposals, so highly technical writing can be difficult.

For more layman folks to understand in your reviewer pool. So make sure that you kind of balance how much technical writing you have versus using more common language and easier to understand text.

We appreciate really well written applications, but you don't have to be a professional grant writer. It's OK if you don't have the perfect sentence or you're not exactly grammatically correct on everything. You're not going to get discounted for punctuation, grammar, etcetera. We what really matters is the content of your proposal.

And then again, make sure that you state the how.

So don't forget, we're humor, we're humans that are reviewing this. Make it so that we can at least read what you're writing. Don't try to cram in at like, you know, 3 point font with no margins. It's going to make it really difficult. We also recognize that a lot of folks have been using AI.

That's OK. If you're using AI for parts of it and you're using it to tailor some language or to

clean some things up, do not submit us an entirely AI generated proposal. We'll be able to tell and you will not score very well.

OK, so we're gonna go through some of the narrative questions and I'm gonna try to get through this as quickly as possible because I know we've got some questions that we need to answer. But for narrative questions one through 3, these are some general checkbox questions. Just because they're checkbox questions doesn't mean.

That all you do is check the box and move on. You want to make sure that you're putting in a little bit more information. So for the first question, if you check yes, which you should, if you check no, you're not eligible for this program, you need to indicate what watersheds, what forest, what Forest Service units you're going to be working in.

So make sure to write that in and not just check the box. The same with the WRAP or the WSPP. So if you are unable to actually find these documents, but you found the names of them, right? But you can't find the actual document to download and you're working with the Forest Service.

To get that information, I would highly recommend that you write under question two the name of the WRAP or the WSPP. You indicate that you're coordinating with the Forest Service to be able to get this documentation and that you'll provide that documentation upon award.

That way the, you know, NFWFWF recognizes that you're working on it and that it's available and that you're still eligible because you can tie back to that work or that WSPP, the WRAP or the WSPP letters of support. So older letter supports are OK, just make sure that they are tied directly to that project or the.

Project activities and make sure that it's fairly recent. The letters of support must be signed by an authorized signatory from the Forest Service unit. So it can't just be your buddy that happens to work at the Forest Service. It needs to be somebody that's actually authorized to sign for the Forest Service.

Again, as noted, because the government shutdown, any form of support documentation is OK, as long as it's obviously from an authorized signatory Rep in the Forest Service unit that you would like to work on, we recommend that you all create.

Letters of support templates. These are very useful for more than just getting a Forest Service signature and support, but to get other partner support as well. The partnerships are an important part of this HAFI program and you will get rated on your partnerships. So a letter template does not. We don't look unfavorably on that. So if you have the same letter where your partners or the force is able to enter in some specific information about themselves, about how they support it, etcetera, and their signature, that's fine.

They can all look fairly similar. We're not gonna discount you for that.

OK, question four. There's a lot of text on the screen and I apologize. I just wanted to give you all some textual examples of the language that you can use to answer question four. So question 4 is.

About environmental compliance. So again, you need to make sure that you are considering compliance and permitting prior to your application. This question is also in the easy grants in easy grants. So when you are filling out your easy grants application on top of your narrative, there's also a question there about compliance.

If you are worried about space, you can say some really general language in your narrative and then point the reviewer back to Easy Grants under this question. Easy Grants For more information that may help save space when you're writing your narrative.

There these boxes here give you some examples of some language that you might be able to use as it relates to environmental compliance. So the first one in the green is really about the compliance documentation already exists and.

They will be. The records of decision will be submitted upon award and then it points the reviewer to easy grants, where in easy grants you would name the decision documents and other documents that you're referring to in terms of compliance.

You can name that there instead of actually in the narrative, which will save you some space. The blue box really talks about the fact that there is an approved document, but the Forest Service is going to be responsible for doing any SHPO and tribal consultation and that we.

Recognize as the project proponent that we're going to be held to some avoidance and minimization measures. And then the third box basically states that we there is no existing documentation. However, you do believe that there is a categorical exclusion that you'll be able to fit under so.

This is important to show the reviewer that you understand that your project is gonna fit under a particular categorical exclusion. And here I wrote down what that exclusion is and that you acknowledge that you're gonna be working with NFWF and SWCA on completing all the necessary paperwork.

There, that really shows the reviewers that you thought through this is an and it isn't just a checkbox for you all.

OK, question 5. So primary this is related to the primary project outcomes and why the project is needed. Explain the problem and present a solution. That's what the reviewers are really looking for. What is the issues that are being and challenges being experienced in this watershed and what are your proposed solutions?

And then write about your overall goal. So I have some example language in here about a potential stream restoration projects and a way for you to really talk about the overall goal and explain the problem in the solution. This is not the question in which you want to talk about metrics. I know it is an easy one to talk about metrics in, but this isn't where you're gonna.

Speak to metrics. That's actually going to come in on Question 9. And then a quick tip, this is a great place for you all to reference the WRAP or the WSPP. So how does your project align with those challenges, goals and potential solutions and proposed projects in that WRAP or that WSPP?

This would be a place to talk about that.

OK, so question number six on the narrative. This is related to your project's activity. So what are your major project activities? So don't do more than check the boxes. You can tell folks to go to question 7 for more information, which I'm going to show you here in a minute.

That's the table and the narrative. Add any additional activities beyond those that are listed. So you do not have to check every single one of the boxes as the activities that you're going

to complete under your project. It's OK if you only check a couple. It's OK if you add a couple underneath there that say, well, our major.

Activities will be invasive species removal and watershed or stream restoration. We are also going to be doing XY&Z. That's OK to put underneath question 6 and then note if there are any planning activities that are necessary to be completed as part of your activities, but then emphasize that the main.

Objective of the project is implementation.

Another tip, remember that just planning projects on their own are not eligible. So if planning is involved, you can state that, but then make sure to emphasize the fact that the project is really geared towards implementation.

OK, narrative question 7. This is where you're going to outline your scope of work. And if what has asked in this application that in addition to your actions and what and an explanation of those actions, you also include what percentage of your budget is going to go towards those actions.

And then the general time frame in which those actions are going to be completed. I came up with a fake project here and it is a fuel reduction prescribed burning project on Forest Service lands. I gave some example.

Language that you all can look at here. Again, be as specific as possible. Let the reviewers know how many crews you're planning on sending out. If you know that already, what types of methodologies you're going to be using. Don't just say we're going to go out and do forest thinning. Well, are you going to do forest thinning using hand tools? Are you going to do? Do it with mechanized means. Are you gonna have prescribed burning that follows up with it, right? Make sure to be as detailed as possible in this table. This is really if you're thinking about a breakdown of how much information under what questions you need in your 5 pages.

I would recommend that you look at question 7 as taking up a page or more. This should be a really heavy piece of your narrative. This is going to tell the reviewers exactly what you plan on doing, how much of your budget is going towards it, and it's going to give a sense of the schedule.

This is also going to help our viewers understand is your budget reasonable? Like if you have a \$250,000 budget and you know, let's say 50% is going to planning when the rest is going to be going towards the actual implementation, we want to know why. Why is planning taking out more money, right? Is it because?

You have to do an EA, right? And there is no EA that exists. Do you need to do the EA ahead of time? Therefore it's going to cut into, you know, a year of your project and a good chunk of your budget. Tell us that right. This is how we're going to be able to determine reasonableness.

And then one more tip here. This may be another great place for you to tie the your project back to the program priorities and the WRAP or the WSPP as well.

OK, so narrative question 8. This is specifically about the program priorities. Don't just check boxes here either. Make sure to explain how your project addresses the HAFI program priority. So I have an example text here which just goes into a little bit more detail. It also has this, uh, you know, add a link to article. If you do, you have the ability to add links

into your um narrative. I highly recommend that you do so instead of attaching documents if you want to.

Provide some scientific backup. If you want to provide a particular methodology or technique, anything like that. If you want to tie it back to something that's publicly available that we can review, add the link and then in that sentence tell us what you want us to look at in that link. So here you could add a link for you know.

Background as to why thinning and prescribed burning really opens up migration corridors and the success of that. That would just be background information for us to look at to say, OK, the project proponent really knows what they're doing. They've researched this, they understand how their project is going to have direct and positive impacts to Fish and Wildlife.

We also have another tip here, which is that do not go through and select all the things. You do not need to select every single one of the metrics, every single one of the program priorities. Just be intentional and be clear. Usually we suggest you select a couple.

Like 2 to three program priorities or two to three metrics, which I'm going to get to in a second, for us to clearly understand that you meet these program priorities or you have good metrics, but you don't have to do all of them. It's OK if you don't. It's actually preferred if you don't.

So project successes. Um.

So this is your metric section. This there are metrics that you're going to need to select in easy grants. So don't just copy the same information that you have in easy grants. This is your opportunity in the narrative to provide us a little bit more information. So in this example, I just selected the.

Management BMP implementation for prescribed burns on the acres burned, which is going to be the metric that you're then held to. How many acres did you actually burn? And then write a blurb about it. So don't copy necessarily this text here, but say you know we our project success is gonna be determined by XY and Z.

One of them may be acres burned. We will track this progress by doing this. We are going to the areas that we have selected for burning have been identified as priorities in the WASP or the WRAP or the WISPs and give a little bit more information here as to how you're actually going to hit your metrics.

And how you're going to monitor the metrics?

This may also be another good place for you to tie your project success back to the HAFI program priorities.

OK. Question 10. We're getting towards the end, you guys. Thanks for holding on. I know I've been talking a long time. Narrative question 10 is about partnerships. So this is again, it's really important that you talk about The Who and the what. So don't just WSPP 50,000. Partners, we actually don't like that. It's not very helpful. I know that you might have a desire to show that you have so, so many partnerships, you're doing such an amazing job with your partnerships. What is more impactful in the narrative is that you give us a handful of partnerships that are meaningful and will actually be contributing and.

Supporting your project, make sure that you detail if you've been working with these, you know, organizations for a long time, or if there may be a new partnership that you're just

starting to develop or a partnership that you know would be useful for you to develop during your time under your period of performance, right? And then look for.

Opportunities.

For diverse partnerships. So a good example is maybe look at how you can engage the indigenous community or tribal community and maybe utilizing and hearing about their traditional ecological knowledge and how to incorporate that in your project. Those kinds of partnerships, the diversity of partnerships is looked favorably.

On by reviewers.

So again, fewer more meaningful partners are better than WISPIing a lot of partners with less details. So just make sure that if you say and not just the Forest Service, the Forest Service is an obvious partner, but let's say you're going to be working with a watershed coalition.

Name the Watershed Coalition and say the Watershed Coalition is going to be involved in the community engagement piece of our work. They are going to provide technical experts to help guide us on how to do the restoration in an effective manner. Whatever that is, make sure you tie it back to the what are they going to be doing with you in your project and don't just WSP a bunch of stakeholders.

Or folks that you maybe want to engagement with but haven't without talking about how you're going to get them engaged in a meaningful way.

So narrative questions 11 and 12. So the first one kind of ties back a little bit to your partnerships, right? So who are the key individuals on the project team and then how are they going to contribute to the project? So you can go back and refer to some of the answers in a question 10, which is going to save you some space in your narrative.

But really, take this opportunity to say who on your team are your technical experts. This is going to help reviewers determine whether or not the project is feasible, technically feasible, and is going to be able to be accomplished by the staff that you're proposing.

And then for question 12, so this is about community engagement. So how are the communities that you're looking at engaging going to be engaged in your project? It is important here that we focus on the word meaningful. So meaningful engagement is not just a check box, it's a.

Process. So if you are planning on hosting community events, if you are planning on hosting webinars, make sure that you talk, speak to in your narrative how you are going to get stakeholders and community members invested in your project, engaged in your project and providing you feedback about your project.

And then how are you going to take that feedback and incorporate it back in to what you're planning on doing? That is the important part. It isn't just like standing up in front of a group of people talking about your projects and then ending the discussion. That isn't a discussion. What NFWF and the reviewers are looking for is how you were going to meaningfully engage and have that ongoing discussion.

with communities and stakeholders.

OK. Questions 13 and 14. So how will this project improve forest health leading to increased timber productivity? Again, this is about the how. So what work are you going to be doing under this project that's going to lead to a healthier forest and then in turn leads to?

Healthier trees for potentially more timber production. Needs to touch on that a little bit in the narrative. And then question 14, this is really about long-term sustainability. So how do you gonna know that your project is going to stand the test of time?

Are you going to have to do, you know, continued maintenance? Do you have a plan for adaptive management? This is that space in which to talk about long-term success, sustainability and potentially some monitoring as well.

Hey, budget.

You have to fill out the budget narrative section in detail in Easy Grant. Don't skip that part. You will get a low score. If you do, make sure to provide a lot of detail. So if you're planning on using a contractor, don't just put a lump sum. So let's say you're asking for \$2,000,000 and 1.5 is going to the contract.

Contractor. You need to explain exactly where that money is gonna go and not just provide a lump sum and say contractor budget not helpful. It's not helpful to the reviewers.

Remember that if you win, if you get an award, the budget that you're filling in now.

Easy grants is actually going to translate to your expenditure table that then you're going to have to work with if you are awarded. So a couple tips here. If you are going to be using a lot of your own personnel account for pay raises, this is the two year project. Do you have a position that's going to get pay raise in your two? If so, you're going to need to create two different.

Line items for your personnel because they're going to have different salaries. Don't try to combine it all into a single line item. That's going to get confusing. Don't lump people together if you're using crews. So let's say you have like 3 thinning crews that are going to go out. They have five people each.

If they all make different salaries, lumping them together as a single crew is going to get extremely confusing and it's not going to work when you get awarded and ask for reimbursement. It will work if you're planning on paying all of your people the exact same salary and fringe benefit. So if that's your plan, then feel free to lump that together. But if not, you might want to have to have.

Separate personnel items for travel and expenses. Now this is the opposite advice. So when we say don't lump all your personnel together, we do want you to lump more of your travel and expenses together where possible. So don't account for every single pen that you want to buy or every single flight that you want to take.

Where you do lump, make sure to explain in the narrative section of your budget the breakdown. So like if you're planning on driving out to a site like I have here 10 times the 100 miles round trip, you're going to have 1000 miles going to equate to the dollar value that you're asking for in your budget. Gives the reviewers a little bit of a better understanding of how you came to your budget.

And then one last thing, rent equipment where possible. Buying equipment over this \$10,000 threshold, which is an Office of Management and Budget guideline, it's going to result in you having to do additional paperwork and track depreciation on that piece of equipment. It's more complicated. It's a lot more paperwork.

A big headache. We recommend you account for renting equipment where possible in your budget. And then again, a more detailed budget for lump sum costs could be included. If you

don't have enough room to do this in the budget narrative itself, you could include this in your other upload section.

Person.

On that on grants that I have applied for, if a lot of the money is going to a contractor, create a table that explains exactly what their scope of work is and how much money is going under each of those scope of work and what activities that scope of work covers. That is going to really help your reviewers get a better understanding of where the funds are going to go.

How they're going to be spent and whether or not that's a reasonable ask and spend.

OK, we're closing out here folks. We're about to get to questions and answers. So there are a lot of HAFI resources out there. A lot of them are on the NFWF website, which has the link on that first slide that I showed you. That link will take you to the NFWF with HAFI.

On that website you're gonna find the NFWF webinar recording and slides, the narrative template that you have to use, so make sure that you use it. And again, you can manipulate it, just don't make it so that we can't read it. The request for proposals, which has more detailed information than what I'm giving you here, and Easy Grants tip sheet, which is extremely.

Helpful. If you've never entered information into easy grants, it will walk you through exactly what needs to happen when you go to submit your application and then an environmental compliance recording by SWCA, who is again the environmental compliance liaison under the HAFI program.

And then there's two other additional resources other than this, what we're doing today, which we're going to send you our slides in this webinar recording so you have it for your reference. But both NFWF and the field liaison, Sam, Amy and I have set up bookings apps. So on the left is the NFWF booking app and on the right is the.

ECT booking app. I'm just going to go ahead and click on it now and see if it brings up our booking app website. It's going to look like this. So if you want to have a one-on-one proposal lab with us, if you have any questions, if you want to talk about your project.

If you want to complain about how ridiculous this all is, whatever you want to do, if you wanted to have some one-on-one time with us, we got 45 minutes for you and you can go on to this booking app which is taking its sweet time opening and fill out information. And what it's going to do is allow you to book time with either Amy.

Sam or I or any of us, depending on who you want to meet with and we can set up that time on our calendars and have that call with you. It's for whatever reason not working right now, but I will when you go to book, I promise. OK, so I think.

That WRAPs up the presentation. I know some of you when you registered asked some questions in the registration and so we co-located and coalesced a lot of those into the questions that I have.

Up now, I'm just going to go over these really, really quick. I'm hoping that in all this talking that I've done, I've answered some of your questions already, but I wanted to touch on these questions here and then we'll go to the questions that came up in the chat and then we'll give you an opportunity to raise your hand and ask some more questions, so.

What are the most competitive project types? There isn't any, except for the fact that you

need to have a project that ties back to a WRAP or a WSPP, has to be on 4 system lands and then generally needs to follow those activities that are outlined.

In the RFP and on the project narrative, a watershed restore like so when a stream restoration project is not going to necessarily score higher than a prescribed burn project. It's really going to depend on the your proposal, your budget, your team, all the other things that come into that narrative. So there isn't.

Really a more competitive project type for this program. Our projects and later stages of development more competitive.

Not necessarily, but my caveat here is going to be the environmental compliance piece. So with the period of performance being limited to two years, if you've already started your coordination, if you already understand what your environmental compliance is, if you already have.

Designs done if you need designs, or if you already have a contractor in mind for who's going to help you do your prescribed burning, whatever this looks like. If you've done some legwork ahead of time, you will be more competitive. You cannot start this application from square one. You're not going to get awarded.

But a project that has, you know, already completed compliance and done some things, they might be looked at a little bit more competitively. But again, it's going to really depend on the situation. So it's going to depend on what forest you're working in, what your benefits are going to be, what your success is going to look like and your metrics are going to look like. So you might have a slight edge if you've done some work.

On the project already that is very possible, but I don't want to discourage you. If you are just getting started, just don't start from square one. Have some of this stuff thought out and 100% have already coordinated and got support from your Forest Service unit that you want to work in.

So is the program regionally focused? No. Again, the only caveat here is it has to occur on forest system lands that have a WRAP or a WSPP. Otherwise it is nationwide.

Are there are higher acreage projects more appealing?

That is a difficult question. I think on surface value, yes, it might feel that way, but the way the reviewers look at it is the impacts to your area. So let's say you live in an area where there isn't a lot of Forest Service land, so you're not out West.

Right. And you have communities that are located right next to your project site that could experience devastating, catastrophic wildfires. And what you're proposing is going to reduce their risk and is going to be extremely impactful because there isn't a lot of forest land in your area.

That project will likely score very high because even if it's smaller acreage, because of the impacts and benefits of that project is going to bring to the community and to Fish and Wildlife resources.

Can a WRAP or a WSPP adjacent land still receive funding if ecologically influenced? The answer is no, unless there is some overlap and that is vague, I know, but if there are some overlap into an adjacent area then yes you can use it. But if you're like a watershed over and there is no real connection.

to that WRAP or, the WSPP, then no, the project would not be deemed eligible. You have to

show that overlap. Can funds be used for biological and or cultural resource surveys?
Absolutely. So this can go into your planning portion of your grant. So if you know that you might have some teeny species located on

Your site it you are likely going to be required to at least do some ground truthing and not just do all desktop work as associated with the compliance piece of the project. So yes, you can use this for surveys, just make sure that the main focus of your project is on implementation.

And then how do we fit our project within a two-year time frame, especially if you need to do environmental compliance, that's really difficult. So what that might result in is you amending your scope of work to make sure that you account for doing the planning and all the upfront work while still including some.

Implementation. So what I mean by this is that you might have grand plans to do 10,000 acres of prescribed burning, but there is no existing documentation with the Forest Service that approves that type of work in the forest that you're working in. You might need to scale back and say instead of 10,000, we're going to do 1000 acres because the first.

Six months, eight months, we're going to be working on compliance and planning and maybe prioritization of areas and where to do that type of work, right? Like there may be some planning things that just absolutely have to happen and will be paid for by this funding source, but that in the end there needs to be some implementation.

That is associated with it. So you might need to look at amending your scope. If you want help with that, book us on the Bookings app and we will help you through that and talk through those ideas with you. OK, so we're gonna go to the live Q&A session now. I have some information in this bottom right hand corner.

Right hand corner the NFWF staff. This is the national program staff that are responsible for the HAFI program. Feel free to reach out to them with questions at any time. The field liaisons, which is again myself, Sam and Amy. Our e-mail is right here and then SWCA for environmental compliance is below.

Amy, do you want to go over questions from the chat? Yeah, we only have a few. Our first one, is it possible to send this recording in case something is missed in translation? Yes. So you will all get. We are going to post this on to a website that we will send you the link to. So it'll be.

This recording and it will be the PDF of the slides with those links associated to it for all the other documents that we discussed today and all the other websites we just discussed today. OK, our next one if the proposal includes both engineering, design and implementation.

And there must be a greater emphasis on implementation. What is the ideal proportion of the budget that should be spent on implementation? And then 80% question mark. Yeah, I think you could probably go lower than 80% on the implementation, I think if you were around 60%.

I think that would be OK. So I would assume that if you are looking at a stream restoration project for example that requires engineering and design, I would recommend that you're at least to your 60% design, maybe even.

80 to 90% design before you apply to this program or similar programs of this elk which

NFWF will fund. There are other programs out there. So I just want to say that there are other programs out there that may be more useful to you that will pay for more planning. Unfortunately this one.

And.

Isn't going to.

So if you are stuck and like I just don't think we're going to get to that 80 to 90% design before this application is due or we don't have the funding to get there, which is a big hurdle for a lot of folks, reach out to us at the liaison team and we can look at other funding opportunities for you either through NFWIP.

Or other ones that we might know of that might be helpful to you. So if this doesn't fit the bill for you, this program reach out, we might be able to help point you in the right direction of other funding sources.

OK. And our last question, can you describe how this program can build on an existing area grant that is already secured and underway? Yes. So if you have an area grant or another NFWF grant that is Forest Service funded.

What you cannot do is have an exact duplicate proposal of the proposal that you won funding for already. And what I mean by that is don't just copy and paste and say we're going to do the exact same activities on the exact same spot with the exact same metrics.

What you can do is say we have been working on this watershed. Maybe you're working on only a portion of the watershed, maybe the upstream or the downstream and you want to do, you want to do the same work in a different portion of the watershed. Great, right. So if you are changing your location using the same activities, that's great if you are.

Maybe working in the same geographic area, but then change your activity. So say you know we started with prescribed fire and forest thinning, but from that we recognize that there is now erosion issues or there was a storm afterwards and it caused all this erosion in the area. Now there's an issue with the nearby stream. We want to do stream restoration in the same reach.

Great. Just clarify why what you're proposing under this new application under the HAFI program is different than what you applied for before, and then expound upon that. You also should talk about your successes and challenges with your existing grant.

And how you plan to use those lessons learned and take those successes forward in this new grant that would also be very helpful.

I see one more question came through. Yeah, another question. Do you foresee any FOs for planning grants that supplement existing grants?

I need to read that one. I need to read that one myself. Do you foresee any happy funding opportunities for planning grants that supplement existing grants? So not at this time. So I know I'm gonna assume here that we've got a quite a few folks that are 501C3 or higher Ed. That have been relying on grants to help fund projects, help fund your organizations. This is an uncertain and a little bit of a scary time. We empathize with that a lot. There have been some restrictions on some of the federal agencies funding as much as they have in the past. The funding for this is secure. You know, it's dependent on whether or not they get the funding right. There's a lot of those caveats and all the NFWF materials that the program

will only happen if they get the funding. But everybody feels relatively secure that the funding is here for this program, for other Forest Service projects, I don't know. Any that would do the planning right off the top of my head in this moment, but I will help look for that. So if the person who asked that question, so Jessica, if you want to do a bookings app with us, we can kind of talk through what your project is and what type of funding you need and then we can brainstorm.

On other places to look for similar Forest Service funding. It may also have to be funded through a different source, but can happen on Forest Service land, so that might be an opportunity as well. So I recommend Jessica, if you want to reach out through the Bookings app to us and then we can set up a time to talk about that.

OK, no more questions in the chat. Does anybody want to raise their hand and be brave and speak out loud so that we can hear a different voice other than my own on this?

OK, I'm hearing nothing or I'm seeing no raised hands. I know you're all muted, so we can't hear you if you're trying to speak, but you can use the raise hand function, which is in the upper part of your team's.

Window if you want to raise your hand.

OK.

I don't think I see anybody. Well, I hope this has been helpful. I know it's a lot of information coming at you quickly, but we really wanted to try to focus on little tips and areas where you could really improve your narrative and suggestions on how to make it easier for reviewers.

Again, if you have any questions, I'm gonna see. Can I go back into the slides here? Go to let me see if this worked this time. Go to the Bookings app. We are happy to speak with you about your project, about your activities. We're also happy to do just spot reviews on some of.

Your narrative. Again, we're not going to read the whole thing and give you full comments, but we'll be able to at least start get you started in the right direction. So please go to our bookings app, which I promise is working. I don't know why it's not showing up on my screen, but it is working. I tested it last night and create a calendar invite for us and we are happy to.

help. So thank you all. If there's no additional questions.

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