

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Source Reduction x Circular Economy Initiative to Reduce Plastic Waste in National Parks**Grant Application Open: March 7 – April 18, 2024****PLEASE NOTE THAT APPLICANTS MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:**

- Proposals would require support (programmatic or financial) from at least 2 entities, including but not limited to: an NPS site, an NPS commercial service provider at the park/site, local friend's group or partner organization, gateway community organization, or municipal government.
- While NPS may not be directly involved in project implementation, written affirmation of collaboration with the NPS from NPS Superintendent is required.
- Concession Operations (and any other for-profit entities) are not eligible to receive grant funds directly from NPF. Funds will need to be administered to other entities and then re-granted.

To further the goals in the [2023 Green Parks Plan](#), the [2023 National Park Service \(NPS\) Plastics Reduction and Elimination Plan](#) (Plastics Plan), [Secretarial Order 3407](#), and in conjunction with goals outlined by the [White House Council on Environmental Quality](#), the [National Park Foundation](#) (NPF) is working with both the National Park Service's (NPS) Sustainable Operations and Maintenance Branch (SOMB) and Commercial Services Program (CSP) to improve lifecycle management of products, with an emphasis on source reduction of plastics, used in and around National Parks and their gateway communities.

The Plastics Plan states that it will employ the EPA waste reduction hierarchy of source reduction and reuse, recycling then composting, energy recovery, and treatment/disposal, in that order. NPS will be placing strong emphasis on reducing plastics by eliminating and substituting with other materials. However, some plastic products in either the short or long-term will not have substitutes and will remain a park waste stream. Furthermore, some plastics such as beverage containers will continue to be brought into parks by visitors and park residents. These waste streams will need to be managed through park efforts – mainly reuse and recycle options. This initiative seeks to apply systems thinking and encourage community and industry-driven solutions through a circular economyⁱ approach.

NPF is seeking innovative proposals to reduce, reuse, and recycle plastics – both from the source reduction and circularity angles. This RFP is being shared with NPS, nonprofit, and commercial entities that administer and/or manage waste systems in and around NPS sites. The NPF and NPS are seeking proposals that represent commitment and collaboration between a park, its concessioner(s) or commercial use authorization holder(s) and/or one or more organization(s) from the park's gateway community/ies. The community organization may be a municipality, chamber of commerce, non-governmental organization, school, or another group. Eligible project submissions must connect to NPS and are encouraged to involve and engage multiple partners. The goal is to foster innovative approaches

to plastics reduction and recycling from within parks, communities, and commercial operations that will lead to enduring change in national parks and beyond.

Entities should apply to this program via [NPF's online grant system, Fluxx](#). Additional details on the application process may be found in "Section F: Proposal Instructions."

Deadline: Applications are due on the NPF Fluxx Grant Portal no later than April 18, 2024 (midnight ET).

Award Amount: Grant requests may be up to \$200,000, with possible exceptions. Grants will be awarded to the applicant organization.

Selection Process: All applications will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from the National Park Foundation and the National Park Service. Grantee selections will be based on the applicant's ability to meet and exceed program requirements and outcomes.

Questions: Please reach out to NPS with questions and inquiries regarding the content of your proposal. Any general grant application questions can be directed to NPF (applications@nationalparks.org).

- Margaret Wilson – NPS Sustainability Operations & Maintenance Branch (margaret_wilson@nps.gov)
- Katy Canetta – NPS Commercial Services Program (katy_canetta@nps.gov)
- Ashley McEvoy – NPF Resilience & Sustainability Program Director (amcevoy@nationalparks.org)

RFP Contents:

- Program Overview**
- Program Criteria**
- Program Timeline and Selection**
- Program Details and Guidelines**
- Program Evaluation**
- Proposal Instructions**

Appendix A: Sample Application

Appendix B: Fluxx Appendix

A. Program Overview

NPF is seeking innovative proposals to reduce, reuse, and recycle plastics – both from the source reduction and circularity angles. This RFP is being shared with NPS, nonprofit, and commercial entities that administer and/or manage waste systems at NPS sites. The NPF and NPS are seeking proposals that represent commitment and collaboration between a park, its concessioner(s), lessees, or commercial use authorization holder(s), and at least one organization from the park's gateway community. The community organization may be a municipality, chamber of commerce, non-governmental organization, school, or another group. Eligible project submissions must connect to NPS and are encouraged to involve and engage multiple partners. The goal is to foster innovative approaches to plastics reduction and recycling from within parks, communities, and commercial operations that will lead to enduring change in national parks and beyond.

Examples of proposal concepts for this RFP may include (but are not limited to):

- i) Plastics accounting, or an assessment that measures the negative impacts of plastics pollution.
- ii) Regulatory overview of opportunities and challenges related to plastics recycling.
- iii) Innovative ways to recycle or reuse plastics, including subsidizing sending plastic commodities to innovative plastic recyclers.
- iv) Providing equipment or other support for reverse logistics, including sending packaging materials back to distributors for reuse.
- v) Business-model related approaches, including procurement plan development, retail floor set/planogram development to promote consumer choice of more sustainably packaged products, or forming a retailer purchasing group that pressures distributors to shift away from plastics.
- vi) Acquisition of new equipment, including new recycling or hauling equipment, dishwashers for businesses to use reusable utensils instead of disposables, source-separated recycling containers, labels, etc.
- vii) Education and messaging campaigns for visitors/gateway communities to encourage reduction.
- viii) Training events or tools for the community and the park to communicate plastics reduction and recycling.
- ix) Toolkits for concessioners on what the next phase/leading edge of greening hospitality could look like regarding circular economy solutions.
- x) Communication toolkits to improve consumer understanding of source reduction and/or circular economy strategies.

B. Program Criteria

While NPF understands and respects that there are a broad diversity of project opportunities and needs in parks, funding will be prioritized for the projects that most strongly meet the criteria below.

Actionable. Project significantly improves or enhances plastics reduction and recycling in and around NPS sites. It features one or more of the priority themes and furthers the goals in the 2023 Green Parks Plan and 2023 NPS Plastics Reduction and Elimination Plan. The scope of work is appropriate and feasible.

Collaborative. Project demonstrates multi-stakeholder engagement, NPS collaboration, partnership between at least 2 entities: park, NPS commercial service provider at park, local friends group, gateway community organization, or municipal government), matching funds, or in-kind match to amplify project proposal.

Impactful. Projects will be thoughtful and precise, describing in detail the knowledge and ability to execute that the applying organizations and their associated NPS units have for reaching project completion. Project clearly results in improvements to resources, stakeholder

operations, or programs, and identifies a plan to measure success, capture data and demonstrate short- and/or long-term impact.

C. Program Timeline and Selection

Application Opens:	March 7, 2024
RFP Informational Call:	March 18, 2024, at 3pm ET (Join via this link) March 19, 2024, at 3pm ET (Join via this link)
Application Closes:	April 18, 2024
Notification of award selection:	May 29, 2024
Grant agreement and payment processing:	June 2024
Grant reports due:	October 31, 2024, and annually until completion

Review and Selection. All applications will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from the National Park Foundation and National Park Service (NPS). Selection will be based on the applicant's ability to meet and exceed program requirements and criteria described herein (see *Appendix A. Example of Online Application*).

D. Program Details and Guidelines

1. Grant requests may be up to \$200,000, with possible exceptions. Only one request may be submitted per organization or entity.
2. Please include the following when submitting your application:
 - **NPS Commitment:** Please attach a signed letter of collaboration from Affiliated Park Superintendent.
3. Annual reports will be due October 31, 2024, and annually until grant is complete. Reports will be submitted via NPF's grant system, Fluxx.
4. Selected partners will be asked to collect project content (videos, photos, participant biographies, impact stories, etc.) and work with NPF to collaboratively amplify partnership activities through social media, media inquiries, and other opportunities as available.

Below are additional guidelines to assist with determining application eligibility:

Guidelines:

- a) Proposals would require support and commitment (programmatic and financial) from at least 2 entities, including: a park, an NPS commercial service provider at the park, local friend's group, gateway community organization, or municipal government.

- b) While NPS may not be directly involved in project implementation, written support from NPS Superintendent is required.
- c) Proposals that demonstrate matching capital or other investment from concessioners, Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) holders, lessees, or gateway communities will receive favorable consideration in proposal evaluation.
- d) Eligible applicants include NPS units, nonprofit organizations, or local municipalities. For-profit entities (including concessionaires) are not eligible to apply for funding, although project funding may support their work on the project. NPF encourages nonprofit friends groups to be the lead applicant and grantee for these projects.
- e) Entities are encouraged to submit multi-year project proposals for up to three years of funding (exceptions possible dependent on proposal).
- f) Grant requests may be up to \$200,000, with possible exceptions. Please reach out to us with specific questions or guidance if your proposal is more than \$200,000.

E. Program Evaluation

Successful applicants will be engaged by NPF program staff over the course of the grant period and may be required to detail their evaluation and program outcomes in a follow up conversation with NPF staff, guided by the standard NPF annual reporting template.

F. Proposal Instructions:

1. Read the RFP and Join an Optional Info Call

Please read this RFP carefully and then use the online application system to submit between **March 7 – April 18, 2024**. Please be as specific as possible when answering application questions to help reviewers fully understand the scope and expected impact of your proposed project.

For additional information, join one of our optional informational calls on March 18 or March 19, 2024. Recordings of the calls will also be posted to NPF's website ([NPF Grants Applications](#)).

2. Apply Online Between March 7-April 18

Entities should apply by accessing [NPF's online grant system, Fluxx](#), and selecting "**Circular Economy Grants**." A copy of the online application can be found in Appendix S for parties who are interested in reviewing the application prior to logging into the system. Detailed instructions for navigating Fluxx may be found in Appendix B.

Here are some important tips below for completing the application:

- 1. If you do not already have an account through Fluxx, you will have to register first (see instructions in Appendix B). Registration can take two to three days to receive approval prior to being able to access the online application, so please allow for this time during the application period.
- 2. The system **does not** auto-save, therefore, be sure to periodically hit the "save" button to protect your work. We recommend completing the application in a word document first and then placing the responses into the Fluxx application to have a copy in the instance that your responses are not saved.

Appendix A

Copy of Fluxx Application (FOR REFERENCE ONLY)

Please note: This form does NOT autosave. Please click the [Save] button to ensure your data will not be lost. Once you have saved and completed your application, click the [Submit] button to send your application to the National Park Foundation. You will receive a confirmation email upon successful submission.

Contact applications@nationalparks.org with any questions about this application.

Organization Information

Grants will be awarded to the applicant organization.

- Organization:
- Primary Grant Contact:
- Primary Grant Signatory:
Primary Signatory is the name of the person who will be signing the Grant Agreement. This is typically the park superintendent, partner organization's Executive Director, or comparable leadership position.

Program/Project Information

- Project Title:
- Project Abstract (Please provide a 3-5 sentence description of your project here):
- Program/Project Description: Please provide a description of your project in 2-3 paragraphs MAX.
- Program/Project Timeline:
- Program/Project Partners
 - Partner organization, if applicable
 - Partner contact name, if applicable
 - Partner contact phone number, if applicable
 - Partner contact email, if applicable
- Who will be the main project lead and who will be responsible for the project implementation?

National Park Partner Information (if applicable):

- Affiliated National Park Service unit(s):
- Select which naming designation your affiliated unit is considered: (*Drop down list*)
- Affiliated NPS Region?
- Affiliated Gateway Community(ies):

Program/Project Criteria

- Describe your organization's ability to implement this project/program. What organizational strengths or resources do you have that will help leverage this project/program?
- Does your project improve other areas of waste diversion?
- Will this be a multi-year project? Y/N
 - If Y, 2 or 3 years? (Or alternatively, how many years are needed to complete this project? 1, 2, 3 years)
- Is project/program relevant to the 2023 Green Parks Plan, the 2023 National Park Service (NPS) Plastics Reduction and Elimination Plan (Plastics Plan), Secretarial Order 3407, or the White House Council on Environmental Quality Greening Government Initiative? Please explain.

The questions below fit the specific weighted criteria (in bold) that will be used in NPF's application evaluation process:

- **Overall Value (30%): Project significantly improves or enhances the NPS Plastics Reduction Implementation Plan and includes at least two entities. It features one or more of the priority themes and furthers the goals in the Green Parks Plan and 2023 NPS Plastics Reduction and Elimination Plan. The scope of work is appropriate and feasible.**
 - How will your project address source reduction and/or circulatory related to single-use plastics? *Reminder:* if unsure about scope of project, reference proposal concept examples in the RFP.
 - Does your proposal address DOI Plan to Phase Out Single-Use Plastics by 2023 and/or GPP goals to divert 75% of waste to landfills by 2035? If yes, please specify how.
- **Stakeholder Buy-In & Collaboration (30%): Project demonstrates multi-stakeholder engagement, NPS buy-in, support from partnerships (at least 2 entities: park, NPS commercial service provider at park, local friends group, gateway community organization, or municipal government), matching funds, or in-kind match to amplify project proposal.**
 - Does your organization have in-kind funding or a partner match available to support this project? Y/N
 - If Y, please indicate the combined value of matching support.
 - How does your project promote collaboration between parks, gateway communities, and the private sector?
- **Budget (10%): The project includes a budget which clearly and accurately reflects the needs of the project with identified expense categories and realistic cost estimates to execute the project within the timeframe identified.**
 - Please provide a budget below that clearly outlines your expense categories, and any secured matching funds. For multi-year requests, please outline projected revenue and expenses per year. Please total all revenues and expenses. Please have separate line items for stakeholder matching funds that are contributing to the project.

- **Project Impact & Innovation (30%): Project clearly results in improvements to resources, stakeholder operations, or programs, and identifies a plan to measure success, capture data and demonstrate short- and long-term impact.**
 - Does your project implement leading edge or innovative approaches to plastic/waste management? How so?
 - How do you plan to track success and evaluate impacts?
 - What is the intended outcome, and will you be able to measure the outcome quantitatively and/or qualitatively?

Grant Request

- Expected project start date:
- Expected project end date:
- Amount Requested:
- Grant Term (*Please state how many months or years are expected for program/project completion*):

Superintendent Certification

- Name of Superintendent/Site Manager of NPS Unit
- Title:

Document Upload

Please upload the following required application documents here:

- Letters of Collaboration from Affiliated Park Superintendent
Please upload Letter of Collaboration from Affiliated Park Superintendent.
- Proposed Project Budget
Please attach a project budget that indicates anticipated or in-hand income and expenses. The project budget should also include proposed NPF grant funding. If request is for multi-year funding, please detail each year plus total.

APPENDIX B FLUXX Cheat Sheet

Logging into Fluxx

For optimal functionality, it is recommended to use the Chrome browser. To install Chrome, visit:
<https://www.google.com/chrome/>

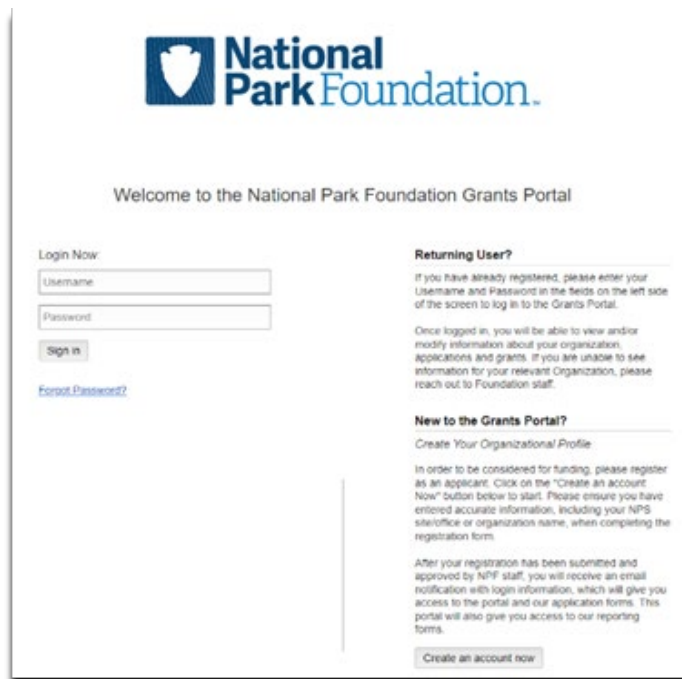
If you have any questions throughout the process, please reach out to the Grants Administration team at applications@nationalparks.org.

New Users

If you have not accessed the system before, please register your profile at <https://nationalparks.fluxx.io/>. We ask that you DO NOT share profiles within your organization; all individuals accessing the portal should have a unique login. Once you have submitted your registration, please allow up to 2 business days for processing, at which point you will be invited to the system with an automated email sent to the email address indicated in the registration.

Existing Users

- ✓ Navigate to the National Park Foundation Fluxx portal by visiting <https://nationalparks.fluxx.io/>
- ✓ Enter your user ID (email address you used during registration) and password (case sensitive)
 - Typically, your ID is your primary email address
 - The password is case sensitive



The screenshot shows the login page for the National Park Foundation Grants Portal. At the top left is the National Park Foundation logo. Below it, the text reads "Welcome to the National Park Foundation Grants Portal". On the left side, there is a "Login Now:" section with two input fields for "Username" and "Password", a "Sign in" button, and a link for "Forgot Password?". On the right side, there are two sections: "Returning User?" which instructs users to enter their username and password to log in, and "New to the Grants Portal?" which provides instructions for creating a new account, including a "Create an account now" button at the bottom.

How to Reset Password

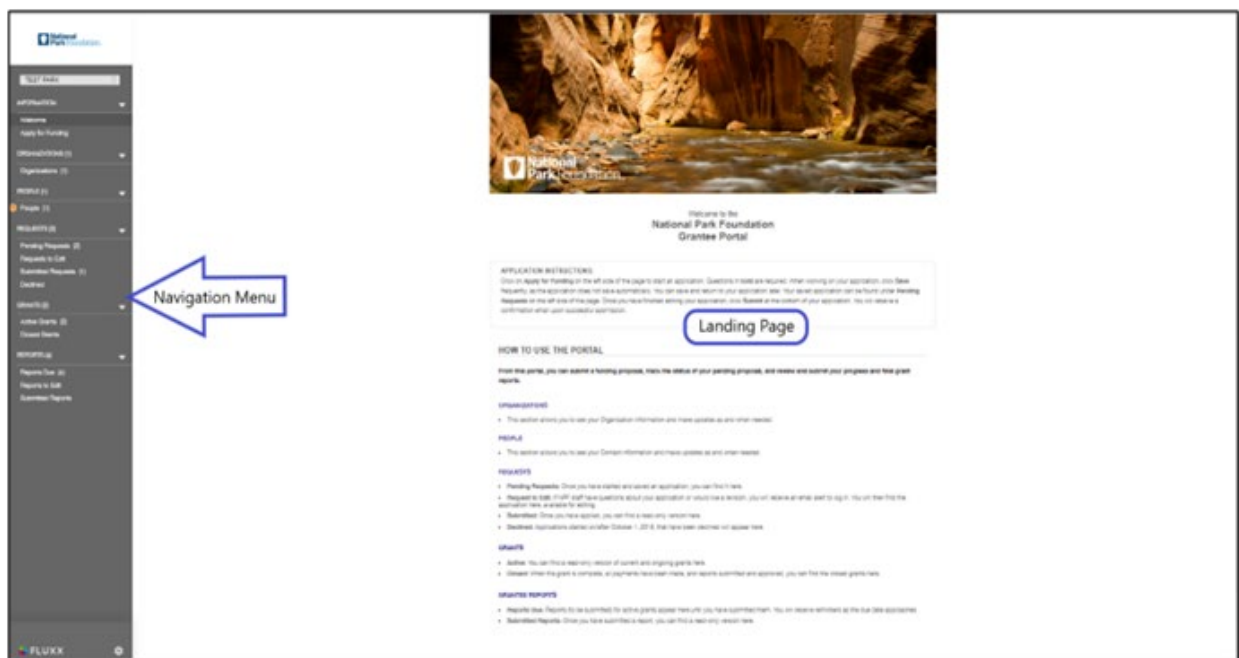
- ✓ Click on the “Forgot Password?” link on the left side of the login page
- ✓ Enter the email associated with your Fluxx account and click “Submit”
- ✓ Allow a few minutes to receive a reset email and follow the instructions provided
- ✓ If you do not receive a reset email, check your spam/junk folder. If you still haven’t received a reset email, please reach out to the Grant Administration team at applications@nationalparks.org

Navigating the Grantee Portal

The NPF grantee portal is where you will submit applications, check the status of applications and subsequent grants, submit reports and update your personal and organizational profiles.

Landing Page

The main landing page has two main sections: the navigation menu on the left and the general information section.



Navigation Menu



1. **Affiliated Organization** - Your organization is listed here. If your email is associated with more than one organization, you can change organizations here.
2. **Information** – Click on Welcome at any time to get back to this main page
3. **Apply for Funding** – NPF’s open applications are linked here. You can also reference closed applications and grantee resources. Please read the application descriptions carefully before starting to ensure you are completing the right form.
4. **Organizations** – Go here to view and update/request updates to your organizational information
5. **People** – Go here to update your contact information.
6. **Requests** – All grant applications are found here, whether still in draft or in review.
 - o Pending requests – Unsubmitted draft applications that you are working on. They will remain here until you submit them to NPF.
 - o Requests to Edit – If NPF staff have questions or require additional information on your submitted request, they will send the application back to you and you will find them here. You will also receive an email alert.
 - o Submitted Requests – All requests that are being considered for funding are located here.
7. **Grants** – Active and closed grant applications are found here
8. **Reports** – This section displays information on upcoming reports due, previous reports submitted, and reports for which NPF has requested additional information. You will receive an email alert requesting additional information.
9. **Gear Icon** - Clicking on this icon will allow you to change your password and log out.

¹ Circular Economy: A circular economy keeps materials, products, and services in circulation for as long as possible. The Save Our Seas 2.0 Act refers to an economy that uses a systems-focused approach and involves industrial processes and economic activities that are restorative or regenerative by design, enables resources used in such processes and activities to maintain their highest value for as long as possible, and aims for the elimination of waste through the superior design of materials, products, and systems (including business models). It is a change to the model in which resources are mined, made into products, and then become waste. A circular economy reduces material use, redesigns materials, products, and services to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products. EPA, <https://www.epa.gov/circulareconomy/what-circular-economy>.