



**Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation
Project RFI and Application
Instructions**

1. **Background.** The Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (CNREF) is a non-profit advocacy organization dedicated to the stewardship of the environmental, cultural and recreational resources associated with the Natural Resources Management (NRM) mission of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

2. **Program Areas.** The CNREF provides support for the following elements of the NRM:

- a. Recreation
- b. Environmental Stewardship
- c. Cultural Resources

The CNREF will strive to match approved, but unfunded NRM initiatives with donors of funds, materials and/or services. Such initiatives include, but are not limited to the following examples:

- a. Physical Projects (Renovations and/or new facilities)
 - (1) Recreation - day use areas, campgrounds, trails, beaches, etc.
 - (2) Environmental Stewardship - Conservation and interpretation of natural resources, cultural artifacts, & ecosystems restoration
- b. Communications/Education - interpretive and educational publications, presentations, exhibitory, support materials, public outreach activities, facilities, and activities.
- c. Volunteers - recruitment of volunteers, matching volunteers with appropriate projects and activities.

3. **Request for Information (RFI).** The Foundation facilitates partnerships which assist the Corps with projects and activities not supported by normal budget activities. Information provided in the application will help determine where the Foundation can best focus its resources. The following instructions are intended to provide guidance to Corps offices when completing the RFI form. The Instructions and information form are also found on the CNREF website: www.CorpsFoundation.org.

a. All Corps projects within the Natural Resources Management Program are eligible to submit a RFI.

b. The form consists of a general information section including space to identify existing and/or potential partners. A project description, itemized budget and schedule are required. One attachment is permitted.

c. The "Description" portion (max 3 pages) will concisely describe:

(1) Tasks the local Corps office would like to accomplish, e.g., build new facilities, make needed renovations, complete research reports, visitor services, preserve cultural or natural resources, create educational or interpretive products, etc.,

(2) How the task will be accomplished, e.g., partnering with a local civic group, cooperating association, working in cooperation with a government entity, etc.

(3) Is there a current formal relationship with an existing partner? If yes, provide details.

(4) Are there potential partners who would be interested in the project? Provide details.

(5) The CNREF encourages activities that demonstrate broad community support by leveraging additional resources, funds and/or in-kind services from other sources.

(6) This description will be no longer than 3 pages with 1-inch margins, using 11 point Arial font. Include the basic who, what, when, where, how. Explain how the project will meet the goals of one or more of the three program areas described on page 1.

- Itemized Budget and Schedule. Complete with all applicable information. Specifically identify the amount requested from the Foundation sponsor(s).
- Attachment (optional). One additional page may include drawings, maps, photos or plans.

4. Selection Procedures.

a. The CNREF Board of Directors receives applications and reviews them considering organizational objectives, desired outcomes, potential donors, and available funds. It may engage appropriate Corps experts, partners and donors to assist in its selection process. The information received will be evaluated for the applicant's capacity to accomplish the mission of the Corps Natural Resources Management Program. Added value and leveraged resources, as described in the list of criteria, will also be evaluated. The CNREF may ask for review by the Corps to get policy and/or technical input.

b. The CNREF will maintain the privacy of all information and keep confidential the names, contact information, photos, direct quotes or other products of the RFI/Application.

c. The operations project manager must sign the letter transmitting information to CNREF.

d. Review criteria will allocate percentage points to various items such as sponsor potential, population served, critical to population safety, recreation, economic impact, wildlife and/or habitat preservation, education, etc.

- e. Exclusions – The Foundation does not fund individual salaries and normal operating costs.
- f. After June 2009 the Foundation will not consider RFI's for amounts less than \$2000.

5. Timeline

a. CNREF will review requests for information (RFI) received by the end of June each year for the projects to begin in the following Fiscal Year. RFI's may be submitted at any time; however, they will be processed at CNREF's discretion. Unique circumstances brought to CNREF's attention may result in prompt attention on a case by case basis.

b. The CNREF will notify projects directly within 90 days of original review.

6. Submission of Information Packages. Send information packages electronically to: RFIreviewboard@CorpsFoundation.org.

7. Partnership Agreement.

a. The CNREF will enter into a challenge partnership agreement with all assistance recipients. The agreement will clearly outline roles, responsibilities, budget and schedule agreed upon for assistance.

b. It is the operations project manager's responsibility to insure s/he has completed the necessary reviews and approvals to make the project viable (OC coordination, 404 permit, NEPA, etc.).

c. District engineers are responsible for the approval of challenge partnership agreements. Approval can be delegated to the chief of Operations for challenge partnership agreements involving \$25,000 to \$200,000. Approval can be delegated to the operations project manager for agreements of \$25,000 or less.

8. Project Reports.

a. When the CNREF provides assistance for a particular project or activity, the Corps field office will submit a written report with photos of the successfully completed project to the Foundation within 60 days of completion. This report will be posted on the Corps NRM Gateway website.

b. Funds Allocation: All funds contributed to the CNREF in will go to the Foundation General Fund and be used in a manner to best serve the mission of the Foundation and the Corps, as deemed by the Foundation Board of Directors. Specific contributions earmarked for the proposed project will be received by the Foundation and then allocated to the Corps in accordance with the financial worksheet contained in the Challenge Partnership agreement. The Project office must complete an expenditure report following generally accepted accounting procedures and submit the report to the Foundation at intervals of 40%, 80%, and 100% completion. CNREF may retain up to 20% of contributed funds for administrative and development purposes.²

² This is comparable to the practices of other foundations with similar goals and functions.

c. If you have questions in filling out the Request for Information, please send a detailed email to RFIhelp@CorpsFoundation.org. Be sure to include your contact information.

CNREF Evaluation Criteria

Project Name _____

Lake Office _____

Grant Request \$ _____

Sustainability – What is the life span of the product and the benefit to the Corps? Can the project be sustained without Foundation support into the future?

Weight of Criteria 8 *(Minimum of 5 years to score 3)*
Score 1-5 _____ **Weighted Score** _____

Partnership value- What is the probability of obtaining sponsorship of the project? What matching dollars, materials or in-kind service have been identified?)

Weight of Criteria 8)
Score 1-5 _____ **Weighted Score** _____

Environmental Stewardship Value- Does the project contribute to the physical improvement of the natural resources?

Weight of Criteria 6 **Score 1-5** _____ **Weighted Score** _____

Recreational Value- Does the product improve the recreational experience for multiple user types?

Weight of Criteria 6 **Score 1-5** _____ **Weighted Score** _____

Communication and Education Value- Projects that increase public understanding of the Corps and its missions through interpretation, outreach, education and public information

Weight of Criteria 6 **Score 1-5** _____ **Weighted Score** _____

Innovativeness – Are other organizations doing this kind of project? How is this project important and unique?

Weight of Criteria 6 **Score 1-5** _____ **Weighted Score** _____

Total Score _____ **out of 200**

CNREF Project Budget

Corps Project Name:
POC Name:
Address:

Telephone:

Email:

	Year 1	Year 2
Salaries		
Travel		
Materials and Supplies (detail as needed)		
Equipment Use		
E&D		
S&A		
Volunteer Services		
Personal property		