

AMOY Working Group Meeting Notes
All meeting sessions were recorded on Zoom and are available for viewing
Friday February 5, 2021

American Oystercatcher Award

FUNDING STATUS, OPTIONS AND HURDLES – Discussion, Shiloh Schulte

- More people interested in NFWF funding that is available but funding itself hasn't increased
- Manomet – foundation and private donor support and sometimes federal contracts. Overall pool has declined and applicants have increased. AMOY Initiative, NFWF has been primary source of funding. Manomet has helped develop proposals that bring in multiple entities into one project – no geographic limit necessarily.
- Have not been able to convince NFWF to go to other institutions to leverage funding.
- TNC Virginia – NFWF often requests reductions in total proposal amounts and that limits our ability to advance our work.
- Question to the group – success or failure with other groups outside of NFWF.
 - NYC Audubon – AMOY work not appealing enough generally; just monitoring is not compelling enough; have had success with combining AMOY work with shorebird nanotag tracking/education programs, etc. and that has secured funding. Example Disney Conservation Fund. Add more appealing elements to the project (e.g. camera supplies, etc.) combined with other more routine elements like monitoring.
 - NJ – have had to reach out to donors as well to fill in gaps with reduced NFWF funding but this just fills in the gaps. Can be difficult to read NFWF's priorities and can't get much traction on the research side. Would help to better understand where NFWF's priorities stand in terms of what they want to fund.
 - Any way to help **shape** the RFP in advance would be great.
 - MA Audubon does lots of PIPL work and can often protect AMOY under the projects/funding that cover PIPL. Other places with no overlap, they need to use other funding – more and more getting AMOY specific funding. They have lots of match available and that has helped securing NFWF projects through Manomet.
 - Ducks Unlimited project in Galveston that is AMOY focused. In TX, DU does a lot of engineering and design for restoration projects, have tied in oyster reef restoration as well to make the project more appealing. Why is DU involved? They offer engineering expertise even on projects not necessarily waterfowl related.
 - From David Carson – The Corps of Engineers has several pots of money for "small" restoration projects (\$5 to \$10 million) under their Continuing Authorities Program. <https://www.nae.usace.army.mil/missions/public-services/continuing-authorities-program/>
More info on Corps funding source
http://apps2.coj.net/City_Council_Public_Notices_Repository/Army%20Corps%20of%20Engineers%20Planning%20and%20Grant%20Assistance%20Programs.pdf
 - Audubon being so far reaching there are usually local chapters that we can work with to get some additional funding for projects.
 - Local environmental groups, e.g., Sarasota Bay Estuary Program.

- Some projects to advance AMOY conservation need more funding than has been available through NFWF source. Jess's mention of NOAA RESTORE Science Program which is focusing on bigger RFPs looking for expanded partnerships and management centered co-production of science.
- NERDA funds – communication is key in the context of connecting projects that aren't necessarily focused on birds/AMOY. For example, collaborating on marsh focused projects to also benefit AMOY.
- From Alan Wilde – Texas Parks and Wildlife builds miles of breakwater locally, accompanied by pimple mounds topped by shell and vegetation. There is some interest in accommodating oystercatchers on the breakwaters or increasing the height of the pimple mounds.
- Jones Bay Oystercatcher Habitat Restoration and Enhancement - <https://gbep.texas.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FY22-WorkPlan-GBC-Council.pdf>
- From David Carson - Projects in Palm Beach included establishing mangrove islands, inter-tidal mud flats, oyster reef, shallow seagrass recruitment areas and AMOY nesting mounds. It's all in the sales pitch. We took the lead in design and obtaining permits first, knowing that certain dredging projects or other sources of sand were becoming available in the future. We then partnered with the Corps and Florida Inland Navigation District to put the package together.
- AMOY being an “at risk” species in USFWS Region 5 can only help funding potential.
- What does the funding landscape look like from state agency perspectives?
 - Tim (GA) – Manomet workshop started conversation between Corps and others in GA and now there is pressure on the Corps to incorporate bird habitat in any of their projects (that we could never fund on our own). Lots of turnover at the Corps so momentum can be interrupted but they are at the table for things like an 80 year plan at King's Bay. Smaller projects like shell rake work they have requested NFWF funds, GA ornithological society. GA in unique position with NFWF because of Southern Company directed funding to GA (~\$75K).
- RAWA – Recovering America's Wildlife Act. <https://wildlife.org/policy/recovering-america-wildlife-act/>
- Janell – encourages states to be ready with projects, proposals and budgets for when opportunities become available.
- What are the barriers for coordinating among entities?
 - For Audubon sometimes it's just internal hurdles. Having things ready since coordinating is so time consuming. Time is a constraint.
 - Mechanics of moving money between states or entities.
 - Overhead issues with having one fiscally responsible organization with multiple contracts.
- Focus on multiple species benefits:
 - Leverage the benefits of the project to more than just AMOY.

STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATE

- Review of steering committee responsibilities
 - Advancing the goals of the group year after year

- The roles and responsibilities document: <http://amoywg.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/American-Oystercatcher-Working-Group-Steering-Committee.pdf>
- Typical structure is 5 people on the committee plus host of next annual meeting
- 2-year turnover or re-nomination
- Current committee is Shiloh S., Lindsay A., Tim K., Pam D. and Shilo Felton.
- Shilo Felton will step down currently and would like to recruit an additional member.
 - Nominated **Sam Collins and Raya Pruner** – both accepted.

ACTION ITEMS

- Steering Committee will follow up with email confirming next steps for the following “Teams”:
 - Teams will be headed up by Steering Committee Members who will recruit others to participate. Right now these are the people leading the charge for each:
 - Habitat Restoration – Tim
 - Funding Landscape/next RFP (may be a Steering Committee initiative and not a separate Team - TBD)
 - Metrics and Productivity database – Pam and Lindsay
 - Banding protocol – Fletcher Smith
- BNA revision – Shiloh will find out more information about reality of this and potential timeframe.
- Website upkeep – is there anyone interested in taking Shilo Felton’s role in keeping up the website? Contact Lindsay Addison.
- Lindsay will follow up with banders to confirm that color bands are being coordinated properly.

WRAP UP

- List serve membership – email Ted if you want to join the list serve. Ted Simons - simons@ncsu.edu
- Next meeting – unsure of status of in person meetings. Clearly there is benefit from the virtual aspect as well.