

National Wildlife Refuge System

2014-15 Friends Partnership Mentoring Program Application



Application Background

The Friends Partnership Mentoring Program is a peer-based, face-to-face coaching opportunity between a pair of mentors (Service employee and Friends member) and the Friends board of directors and key Service employees from the requesting field station. Mentoring is designed to address four priority areas for Friends partnerships:

1. Core management of Friends organizations—e.g., obtaining 501(c)3 status, board development, bylaw development, and organizing administrative and financial operations;
2. Developing or strengthening joint partnerships—e.g., defining roles and responsibilities for Friends and Service staff, meeting effectiveness, celebrating accomplishments, and planning together;
3. Dealing with change/transition—e.g., changes in Service staff and board members, life cycle stages for nonprofit organizations, strategic planning, and repurposing; and
4. Triage/crash cart assessment—e.g., revitalizing a partnership in decline and in danger of collapse.

Who May Apply

It is recommended that the Project Leader and/or the designated Service Liaison meet with their Friends board of directors, or vice versa, and discuss if mentoring is a service that can be helpful to support the partnership. Mentoring is not just focused on addressing problems, it can also focus on an anticipated challenge, or normal change such as experienced through organizational life cycles. If there is agreement to submit an application, all three sections of the application must be completed and submitted. It is the expectation of the mentoring program that all key Service staff and the entire board of directors will be available for and participate in the mentoring site visit with their mentors, so open discussion about applying to the program should include everyone who may be involved.

Mentoring Timeline

The deadline for this first call for applications is December 1, 2014, with a second call for applications taking place later in 2015, followed by a year-round open application process. For this first call for applications due on December 1, applicants will be notified of their acceptance into the program before or no later than January 30 with site visits scheduled between February and July, all depending on the volume of applications received.

Mentoring Process

Friends mentoring is a program funded by both the Refuge System headquarters and the Regional offices at no expense to the individual field station or partnership being mentored. When a partnership is selected for mentoring, mentors are carefully chosen to match the needs of the partnership with the strengths and availability of the mentors. The mentors work directly with key partnership contacts to obtain additional information and schedule a two day site visit. The purpose of the site visit is to meet, seek, share, discuss and coach. The site visit will result in a written report by the mentors, provided to the partnership within a month following the site visit, which identifies recommendations and opportunities to succeed.

Application Submission Instructions

This application has been provided in fillable pdf format. This application includes three sections, one for the Friends organization to complete and one for the Service employee to complete. Each section may be completed and submitted jointly or separately. If submitted separately, the Service must submit the approval and signature page and all required attachments along with Section 2. Incomplete applications will be returned to applicants.

Send as email attachment to:

or

Send by postal mail to:

FriendsMentoring@fws.gov

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Joanna Webb
5275 Leesburg Pike
MS: NWRS
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Section 1 — About the Friends Organization

To be completed by the Friends organization applicant.

Name	Address
Email	City
Phone	State, Zip
Friends Organization Website	

Full name of the Friends organization:

Applicant's position on the Board of Directors:

Name(s) of Service sites supported:

1. Which of the four mentoring priority areas listed on the instruction page of this application are you seeking mentoring?

2. What do you hope mentoring to accomplish for you, your organization, and/or your partnership?

3. What [life cycle stage](#) do you think your Friends organization is currently operating? (Start-Up/Formative, Growth/Expanding, Maturity/Sustaining, or Declining)

4. What is the written mission of the Friends Organization? Write here or indicate if it is included in an attachment, such as a Friends brochure.

5. Does the Friends organization have 501(c)(3) (tax-exempt) status? Yes No
If no, then please explain. If yes, then in what year was it obtained?

**Section 1 — About the Friends
Organization continued**

6. Does the Friends organization have a current strategic plan?
Yes No If yes, please attach.

7. How many board of director positions do you currently have, what are their positions, and identify if any are currently vacant?

8. Explain any other board changes experienced by the organization in the past year?

9. How many general members does the organization currently have?

10. Does the Friends organization operate a nature store? If yes, what is the anticipated annual revenue for this year?

11. Please list the most important programs, activities, and events that the Friends organization conducts in support of the Service?

**Section 1 — About the Friends
Organization continued**

12. What are the main sources of revenue for the Friends organization?

13. Please identify/explain if the Friends organization relies on other external partners to fulfill its mission and programming?

**Section 1a — About the Partnership
between Friends and the Service**

14. In your own words, what is the purpose of having a Friends partnership at your field station?

**Section 1a— About the Partnership
continued**

15. What are the most prominent strengths and weaknesses of the partnership with your field station?

Strengths

Weaknesses

16. Briefly describe any communication challenges amongst the board and/or within the Service partnership that could be addressed.

17. Are there any other challenges you believe may/are currently hindering the success of the Friends partnership with the field station?

18. What would you like more of from the field station in order to help fulfill your organization's mission?

19. Does the Friends organization have the organizational capacity and resources to sustain the current level of assistance to the field station? If no, why not?

20. Is there anything that the field station is currently doing, through support by the Friends organization, which may be difficult for the organization to support long-term?

Section 1b—Mentoring Visit Priorities

21. First rank, in priority order from 1 to 6, the main topical areas of assistance below which you would like to focus your mentoring visit, and then rank sub topics, from a to g, within each main topic you have selected. Leave blank any that do not apply.

Preparing the Organization's Foundational Documents/Processes

- Obtaining and maintaining 501(c)(3) status
- Bylaws development
- Mission/Vision
- Friends Partnership Agreement
- General fiscal operations
- Other

Board Governance

- Board development
- Board succession planning
- Establishing and defining responsibilities of officers, board members and committees
- Board members position descriptions
- Other

Communication and Joint Partnership Elements

- Enhancing meeting effectiveness
- Establishing and communicating roles between the board and Service staff
- Developing an orientation plan
- Defining the partnership
- Celebrating accomplishments
- Need a facilitator to help us with communication
- Other

Engaging People both Inside and Outside the Organization

- Developing/expanding community partnerships
- Membership development
- Membership engagement
- Volunteer recruitment
- Other

Building Capacity

- Strategic planning
- Developing/managing a nature store
- Fundraising support
- Diversifying revenues
- Increasing programming
- Grant writing
- Other

Dealing With and Managing Change

- Organizational life cycle assessment
- Board turnover
- Service staff turnover
- Repurposing/reevaluating
- Other

Other

22. Briefly describe any factors you believe may help facilitate the success of the Friends partnership.

If submitting section 1 separately, please submit by December 1, 2014.

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Send by email: FriendsMentoring@fws.gov

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Section 2 — About the Service Site

To be completed by the Service employee applicant.

Name	Address
Email	City
Phone	State, Zip
Applicant's Title:	

Service Site Name:

Service Site Region:

Service Site Website:

1. Which of the four mentoring priority areas listed on the instruction page of this application are you seeking mentoring?

2. What do you hope mentoring to accomplish for you, your organization, and/or your partnership?

3. What is the written mission of the Service site? Write here or indicate if it is included in an attachment, such as a page from your Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

4. How many Service employees work directly in the Visitor Services program at your field station and what are their responsibilities?

5. Do you operate a Visitor Center? Yes No
If yes, what is your estimated annual Visitor Center visitation?

**Section 2 — About the Service site
continued**

6. List any Service position vacancies that are affecting the Friends partnership and identify the role that position serves for the partnership.

7. What other Service staff changes in general have you had in the past year?

8. What is the name and position of the current Service Liaison to the Friend's Board of Directors?

**Section 2a — About the Partnership
between the Service and Friends**

9. What [life cycle stage](#) do you think the Friends organization is currently operating? (Start-Up/Formative, Growth/Expanding, Maturity/Sustaining, or Declining)

10. Does the Friends Organization have a current and valid Partnership Agreement with the field station? Yes No
If no, please explain.

11. How often do you have joint meetings with Service staff and Board members together?

12. When and how was the last time you jointly met to specifically:

Review roles and responsibilities within the partnership?

Formally orient new board members and/or new Service staff to the Friends partnership?

Discuss partnership problems or engage in problem solving to address weaknesses?

13. How is the Friends organization presently supporting your field station's mission?

**Section 2a— About the Partnership
between the Service and Friends
continued**

14. Please list the most important programs, activities, and events that the Friends organization conducts in support of the Service?

15. Please identify/explain if the Service relies on other external partners to fulfill the goals and objectives of your Friends partnership activities?

16. Are there other community partners that could be nurtured and integrated into the work of your Friends partnership?

17. What are the prominent strengths and weaknesses of the partnership with your Friends organization?

Strengths

Weaknesses

18. Briefly describe any communication challenges amongst the board or within the partnership that could be addressed.

19. Are there any other challenges you believe may/are currently hindering the success of the Friends partnership at the field station?

20. What would you like more of from the Friends organization to help the field station meet its mission?

21. Is there anything that the Friends organization is currently doing, or not doing, that Service staff does not fully support?

22. Is there anything that the Service staff is currently doing, or not doing, that the Friends organization does not fully support?

Section 2b—Mentoring Visit Priorities

21. First rank, in priority order from 1 to 6, the main topical areas of assistance below which you would like to focus your mentoring visit, and then rank sub topics, from a to g, within each main topic you have selected. Leave blank any that do not apply.

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- Board turnover
- Service staff turnover
- Repurposing/reevaluating
- Other

Other

22. Briefly describe any factors you believe may help facilitate the success of the Friends partnership.

If submitting section 2 separately, please include Section 3 and all attachments and submit by December 1, 2014.

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