Audubon’s Western Water Initiative is pleased to announce a new round of Western Water Network Grants! The goal of the program is to support Audubon chapters in the arid West who lead projects that keep priority rivers and lakes healthy, resilient, and accessible to migratory birds and human communities through policy, advocacy, habitat restoration and enhancement projects, and community science efforts.

Access the online application here.

The Western Water Initiative prioritizes both river and saline lake watersheds throughout Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Wyoming. Chapters and Campus Chapters that overlap with these areas are eligible for grant funding through the Western Water Network grant program. This overlap area includes close to 50 chapters, thousands of volunteers, and communities that are on the front lines of major drought, diversions, and changes in climate. Working together, this network is a powerful on-the-ground force that makes an impact locally and strengthens ties to the water bodies we are working to protect and restore.

Figure 1: Major watersheds, saline lakes, and Audubon assets in the arid West.

Specifically, Audubon Western Water Network grants will fund activities that best align with one of the following conservation goals:
• **Policy and Advocacy** – Acknowledging the diverse cultural, traditional, and personal connections to water systems in the West, the Audubon Network will come together as a coalition of skilled advocates to achieve long-term policy goals while uplifting new advocates and empowering seasoned leaders. A holistic approach that includes digital organizing, grassroots action, compelling and consistent digital storytelling, and outcome-focused education will not only help Audubon win state, regional, and national legislative campaigns, but it will ensure momentum for future actions, sustain engagement, and close gaps in capacity. The Audubon Network is local everywhere and includes key constituencies that are able to advance critical water policies in the West.

• **Community Science** – The Audubon Network includes a foundation of volunteer and staffed chapters, center and sanctuary volunteers, students of the environment, and outdoor enthusiasts who come to Audubon to celebrate and learn more about birds. The Western Water Initiative will honor this commitment to bird conservation by involving Network volunteers and partners in community science projects and surveys that balance accessibility and rigor to answer important questions about the effect of drying rivers and lakes on priority birds and their ecosystems over time. Surveys are not single engagements separate from the overall goal of protecting and restoring waters in the arid West, but opportunities to cultivate energetic volunteers, monitor vast geographies, measure the impact of our work, and communicate what is occurring on the ground to communities, policymakers, and partners.

• **Habitat** – A symptom of a drying river or lake is a degraded habitat that no longer serves birds or the cultural and recreational needs of people. This message resonates across diverse groups and brings them together to steward riparian and wetland ecosystems in their own communities. The Audubon Network, in partnership with local communities, organizations, and agencies, will restore, create, and enhance habitat through short-term volunteer engagements and long-term projects. Participants will replenish acres of habitat while learning about their local water system so that they can take policy action as advocates. These engagements are fun and hands on, but also support larger and long-term habitat goals.

In addition, our network must reflect the communities most threatened by water scarcity and aridity in the West, and those communities should help lead our grassroots initiatives. To get to this point, Audubon must invest in people of color, young professionals, tribes and indigenous people, families in rural and urban areas, Spanish speakers, farmers and landowners, working-class communities, and others historically excluded from mainstream conservation spaces. For this reason, projects that emphasize building meaningful partnerships with frontline communities, engaging new audiences, enhancing access, developing new leaders, developing cultural competencies and inclusion skills, and integrating new audiences and perspectives will be prioritized.

Through the Western Water Network grant program, we aspire to support chapters, their communities, and the Audubon network as we secure more balanced water solutions, create and restore valuable riparian and saline lake ecosystems, and use science based approaches to conservation in the arid West.
Grant Guidelines:

We are excited to support Audubon chapters and the collaborations that enable them to work with each other, their communities, and with other elements of Audubon. By focusing on key conservation goals proven to secure a better water future for the west, the Audubon Network will increase our ability to achieve ambitious wins for the rivers, lakes, and streams all living things depend on.

All proposals must work toward one of the three identified conservation goals: Policy and Advocacy, Community Science, or Habitat. Projects could include: starting or expanding a community science survey at the Salton Sea; leading a campaign to oppose a diversion on the Gila River; restore riparian habitat along the Colorado River where invasive species have moved in; using Audubon’s latest climate science to advocate for better water solutions in your state; lead a Great Salt Lake themed bird walk with elected officials and community members; support restoration and education efforts in partnership with Tribal Nations.

In addition, all proposals must address the following components:

- **Education and Engagement**: Supporting active knowledge sharing, training, and participation in local actions and learning opportunities.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion**: Ensuring everyone has equal opportunity, honoring the unique differences between us, and actively engaging, welcoming, and empowering people where they are.
- **Communications**: How and when you talk to your community, networks, and people you want to influence. This generates powerful stories that can be shared across multiple platforms and between individuals.
- **Partnership**: Audubon cannot do anything alone. Collaboration across organizations and communities build power, relevance, and expertise that influence our ability to make lasting change on a large scale.

Successful Western Water Network Grants applications typically request between $1,000 and $3,000. Please be open and clear about your budget needs.

Who Can Apply:

- Affiliated Audubon chapters looking to build their capacity by doing on-the-ground work closely aligned with Audubon’s Western Water Initiative.
- Chapters located in Arizona, California*, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon**, Utah, and Wyoming.
- Projects built and facilitated collaboratively between traditional and campus chapters are encouraged.
- Priority will be given to those applicants who articulate their vision clearly, explaining how the grant will enable their chapter and the network to advance clear policy and advocacy, habitat, and/or community science goals.
- Chapters that can complete their project within 12 months of receiving funding.
Eligible California chapters must be working within the Colorado River Basin, in areas receiving Colorado River Water, or at the Salton Sea, Owen's Lake, or Mono Lake.

Eligible Oregon chapters must be working within the Lake Abert watershed.

We anticipate and encourage funding proposals that engage multiple chapters. However, there should be one lead chapter that will submit the application and administer the funds. The allocation of funds among chapters or additional partners should be made clear in the budget.

How to get Started:

- A Microsoft Word document listing the application questions can be found below. Use this to develop your application before filling out the online form.
- Check out this recorded webinar about the grant opportunity.
- Your project may benefit from several planning resources. They can be found on Audubon Works and below.
- Your application will benefit from coordination with your local Audubon office. Staff contact information can be found in the FAQ document below. Projects built on collaboration between state/regional offices and applying chapters will be prioritized.
- The application is deadline is Friday April 2, 2021, 8pm ET/6pm MST.
- Access the online application here.
- Important note: The application must be completed online and in one sitting. It cannot be saved.

Timeline:

- Application deadline: Friday, April 2, 2021, 8pm ET/6pm MST.
- Notification and disbursement: Successful applicants will be notified by Friday, May 07, 2021.
- Reporting: All grantees must complete a mid-term project report, a final project report, and work with Audubon staff to submit one piece of public facing communications highlighting the project.
  - Mid-term report: Due December 03, 2021. This report will describe overall project activities and results, conservation outcomes, budget detail, as well as progress on the communications component (see below).
  - Final report: Due May 27, 2022. This report will describe overall project activities and results, conservation outcomes, and budget detail.
  - Communications: Due before or on May 27, 2022. With this reporting component, we hope to elevate your work by using Audubon’s Western Water website and other digital platforms to share compelling stories about your project. This component can take the form of an article, Q&A, blog, video, a before and after photo series, or any other medium that you feel best portrays your work. You will be encouraged to coordinate with local Audubon staff to provide guidance and assistance with this requirement. An Audubon staff member will reach out in the summer to discuss options and provide guidance and examples.
    - Forms for these reports will be provided and are available below.

Questions? Please contact Audubon Southwest Outreach Biologist Steven Prager at
steven.prager@audubon.org
Application Resources:

- Grant Announcement and Guidelines
- Western Water Grant Webinar: Recording
- Application Questions (Word Version)
- Online Application Form
- Western Water Network Grants FAQ
- Suggested Projects
- Western Water Network Grants Reporting Template
- Water and Birds in the Arid West Report
- Chapter Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion How-To Guide
- Audubon’s Campaign Advocacy Manual
- Find Your Flock webinars, recorded trainings and resources