About the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance

The Union Sportsmen’s Alliance (USA) is a Union-dedicated, non-profit organization founded in 2007 in partnership with the AFL-CIO and its affiliates to unite Union members through a shared interest in the outdoors. The USA is committed to uniting the millions of Union members who hunt, fish, shoot and recreate outdoors into one community with a shared commitment to educate future generations of sportsmen and sportswomen, conserve wildlife habitats and volunteer for projects that improve outdoor access for all.

The mission of the USA is to unite the Union community through conservation to preserve North America’s outdoor heritage.

The USA brings more than a decade of conservation experience connecting Union volunteers with conservation projects. It also has a proven track record of partnering with other non-profit organizations, state and federal agencies, companies and communities to benefit all stakeholders and the future of conservation.

About the United Outdoors Conservation Fund

Since its creation, the USA has grown to become one of the nation’s largest conservation organizations with more than 250,000 current members. The USA works with both the public and private sectors to protect and restore our nation’s natural resources and wildlife habitats and create or improve outdoor recreational access through financial support and volunteerism. The USA supports conservation efforts in all 50 states and U.S. territories and, to date, has executed more than 150 conservation projects since launching its Work Boots on the Ground program in 2011.

Through the generous support of our charter Unions, Partner Locals, and individual members, the USA has created the United Outdoors Conservation Fund to make an even greater conservation impact. The United Outdoors Conservation Fund will provide significant financial resources, nationwide, to Union-based organizations and agency partners that wish to execute high quality, impactful conservation and access projects as well as conservation outreach and education programs to benefit their local communities but require financial assistance to do so.

The monies available through the United Outdoors Conservation Fund are generated through a variety of sources including USA conservation dinners, corporate sponsorships and major donations.
Who can Apply?

Eligible applicants include any Union organization (local, district council, building trades council, regional council) that has completed a successful USA conservation dinner or USA sporting clays shoot in the past 18 months, or a local Union that is a current member of USA’s Partner Local program with at least half of its local being current active members of the USA. Grant funds are also available to conservation-based non-profit organizations and local, state and federal agencies that work with Unions.

What is the Process?

Proposals for USA’s United Outdoors Conservation Fund grants will be submitted in a two-stage process. The first stage includes an initial application (Letter of Intent), which must be submitted electronically through an online form [https://unionsportsmen.org/online-grantapplication/](https://unionsportsmen.org/online-grantapplication/). The initial application may be submitted a month before the spring and fall cycles. Applications received from July 1 to July 31 will be considered for the fall grant cycle. Applications received from January 1 to January 31 will be considered for the spring grant cycle.

Following the 4-week February and August review periods, selected applicants will advance to the second stage of the grant process and invited to submit full proposals. Full proposals must be submitted within sixty (60) days of the invitation. The USA will make final funding decisions within 30 days of receiving full proposals. The application process, from the initial application review period start dates of Feb. 1 for the spring cycle and Aug. 1 for the fall cycle to the final decision is made should not exceed 120 days.

All applications will be reviewed and ranked through a standardized process evaluating the: feasibility, quality, impact and financial needs of each project. The most successful applicants will bring new and existing partners to their projects.

If the applicant is awarded a grant, work on the project must begin within 180 days of the grant approval, and all work must be completed within one calendar year unless previous arrangements have been made and accepted by both the USA and grantee.

Available Funding

Applicants are eligible to apply for up to $10,000 per project.

Match Requirements

The USA requires each grant to be matched with monies or equivalent goods and services. Projects are required to provide at least a 1:1 match to the requested funds. Projects that exceed a 1:1 match ratio will be given greater preference. Matching funds include, but are not limited to, the following: cash, value of volunteer hours (not to exceed more than 50% of the project costs), donated materials and services, or other tangible contributions to the project objectives.

To be eligible, matching contributions must be:

- Raised and dedicated specifically for the project (general operating funds of the grantee are ineligible);
- Applied only to the grant and not to any other matching program(s); and
- Spent/applied between the project start and end dates designated in the grant application (the start date may be back-dated up to 1 year prior to the proposal deadline to allow recent work directed to the project to be applied as a match).
Eligible Projects
All projects should address a conservation need and benefit the community. Projects must also provide opportunities for multi-partner involvement and coordination using Union volunteers and their families to execute the project. Some of those include:

Infrastructure
- Improving public access to the outdoors;
- Restoring America's parks, trails and recreational waters;
- Increasing access for people with disabilities and Veterans;
- Supporting local, state and national agencies' infrastructure needs.

Community Outreach
- Educating, introducing and building a deep appreciation and love for the outdoors with youth and families;
- Introducing and increasing mentorship of young adults to Union trades through conservation projects;
- Supporting local community’s efforts to increase access to their natural resources through recreation, hunting and fishing.

Habitat
- Conserving critical wildlife habitats and natural resources;
- Supporting existing habitat conservation and stewardship projects;
- Implementing hands-on habitat restoration and stewardship activities;
- Supporting partner projects that align with USA conservation programs.

*Projects on public or private property are admissible, but the property must be accessible to the public.

What the Grants do not Fund?
- Political advocacy or litigation of any kind;
- Shortfalls in natural resource agency budgets;
- General administrative overhead or indirect costs;
- Multi-year grants (applicants may re-apply);
- Basic research (including graduate research).

Reporting Requirements
All successful applicants will be required to complete necessary reporting during and at the conclusion of the project. Reports will include written narrative, photos and press copies of the project. The grant project leader will receive information containing all necessary forms and supplemental information to complete the reports.

How to Apply
Start an application by clicking on the following link: https://unionsportsmen.org/online-grantapplication/. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting their application. Once an application has been initiated, it may be saved and then modified and submitted at a later time, up until the application deadline.
General Procedures for Grant Recipients

After project selection, USA staff will work with applicants to prepare grant agreements and other necessary paperwork. Additional information about the grantee’s organization and its finances may be solicited during this time.

Please note that preparation of grant agreements will require approximately four (4) weeks after USA receives the additional required information from the grantee. Once grant agreements are finalized, funds will be advanced to qualified grantees based on cash needs of the project; some awards may be made on a reimbursable basis. Grantees will be required to submit Interim and Final Financial and Programmatic reports.

If you have any questions, please contact the USA staff at conservation@unionsportsmen.org