

Friends Mentor Application



Application Background

The purpose of the Friends Partnership Mentoring Program is to ensure Friends and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) partnerships are healthy and productive, thereby increasing effectiveness in carrying out complimentary missions, goals, and objectives. Mentoring is a form of advanced education and information sharing between mentoring teams, Service staff, and Friends members. All types of Friends partnerships, from nascent to mature, and from those needing a reset to high performing groups, may benefit.

Mentors are carefully recruited and selected based on the skills, characteristics, and eligibility requirements outlined below. Mentoring is a serious commitment and should be evaluated carefully for a “good fit.” Once recruited, mentors go through formal mentor training specific to their role in the Friends Mentoring Program.

Being a Friends mentor is a wonderful opportunity to pay it forward and develop skills in others—to share knowledge and experiences for strengthening partnerships committed to wildlife conservation. A mentor’s role in the program is to be a neutral catalyst, ambassador, facilitator, and coach. Mentors help develop teamwork and cooperative relationships between the Service and Friends organization. The mentors will assist the Friends partnership by providing fresh perspectives and tools to identify strengths, challenges, and priorities related to the strengthening systems, processes, programs, and relationships.

Mentor Eligibility

What skills, knowledge, and commitment are required of prospective mentors?

- Currently serves or has served on a Friends board of directors or as a Service employee at the field station level. *Mentors may include Friends and staff occupying a variety of positions in their respective organizations and may include retired Service employees or former board members.*
- A positive attitude toward the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, its mission, and the Friends program.
- Effective listening, communication, writing, and facilitation skills.
- Effective team player—reliable, productive, cooperative, adaptable, committed, and respectful.
- Ability and willingness to respond in a timely manner, plan effectively, prepare agendas and presentation materials, write post-visit reports and follow-up communications.
- Commitment to serve as a mentor for three years (as a mentor for the first two years, as a mentor/coach for the third year) and travel at least once a year to conduct mentoring.
- Commitment to successfully complete the core mentor training program at the onset of their assignment. The mentor training program will be held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. All expenses for training travel will be paid for by the Service’s headquarters. The training dates are April 19– 22, 2024.

Detailed Time Commitment and Expectations

An example of the time commitment for one mentor session is demonstrated below. All work is done as part of a mentor team. Total time commitment is approximately two weeks spread throughout each year. You may choose to do additional mentor sessions.

- One pre-visit planning effort per year. This may include numerous phone and/or video (e.g. Zoom or Teams) calls, sending and responding to emails, agenda development, assembling presentation materials, etc. amounting to up to one week of work.
- One on-site mentoring visit per year. This may include up to two days for travel and two to three days for the site visit.
- One post-visit report per year. This work could take up to two days.
- Follow-up communications for the visit (a total of up to eight hours). This may include phone calls, emails, and reviewing agreements at 1, 3, 6, and 12-month post visit check-ins.

Scope of the Mentor Position

Mentors work closely with their regional coordinator and will be assigned at least one mentor visit per year. Mentors will always work as a pair, usually consisting of one Service staff person and one Friends member. The pair will work closely together to plan the site visit, conduct the on-site mentoring meetings and activities with the Board of Directors and key Service staff, share equal duties in writing up a post-visit report, and schedule follow-up communications. All mentor travel expenses will be paid for by their regional office.

Application and Submission Instructions

Applications are due January 8, 2024

Applicants should *download* this form to their local computer; close their browser; then open the form using Adobe Acrobat or Adobe Reader. If you complete the form in a web browser instead of Acrobat or Reader; you will not be able to save your work.

Name Street Address

Email Address City, State

Phone Zip Code

Full name of the Friends organization that you represent:

Applicant's position with the Friends or with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Applicant's supervisor name and/or reference from the Friends board of directors:

Contact info for the above named supervisor or board reference:

Friends should provide a contact from their board who can be a reference for this application.

The reference should be able to both verify your availability to be a mentor and also verify experiences that you describe below.

Applicants may attach one additional page, if needed, to fully answer application questions.

Application and Submission Instructions (continued)

1. What is your experience on the board of your Friends group and other boards? If a Service employee, what is your experience working with a Friends board?

2. What is your experience facilitating meetings, hosting training events, or teaching?

3. Why do you want to be a Friends Mentor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

4. Do you have reservations about doing the administrative work required as part of each mentor visit? (e.g. email, phone communications, note-taking, and report-writing?) Yes No

5. Describe your experience collaborating with a team member to produce a document or report:

Successful mentoring can only be successful if all parties involved are fully committed. This means that Service staff and board members at the site as well as mentors must work together closely throughout the process. By submitting this application, you certify that you are prepared to make this commitment.

Name of Staff Participant

Signature

Date

Applications should be submitted as an email attachment to the National Friends Coordinator, Linda Schnee at linda_schnee@fws.gov on or before January 8, 2023. You may contact Linda with questions at any time.

Your application will be reviewed by a panel of Friends coordinators and mentors. Panel members may contact supervisors, board contacts, and/ or station staff as references.

You will be contacted about the status of your application by early February. If accepted as a mentor, you will promptly be given information on how to begin planning your trip to the National Conservation Training Center.