



Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands

Project Description

Having been awarded a grant through the US State Department's US-Russia Peer-to-Peer Dialogue Program, The Wetlands Institute (TWI), Wetland Link International (WLI) and Wetlands International Russia (WIR) have teamed up to generate a beneficial international dialogue between wetland centers in the US and Russia. This project, *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands*, seeks to identify the shared challenges of those working in wetland education and outreach throughout the US and Russia and assemble cases of best practice and delivery. This project is currently seeking six (6) wetland centers, divided equally between the US and Russia, to participate in an international exchange program and conference, develop a proven methodology for use of social media, data sharing and outreach materials, and produce a final manual for advising wetland centers on the best practices for public education and engagement as they pertain to wetland education. This manual will complement the existing *Handbook on Best Practices for Planning, Design and Operation of Wetland Education Centres* published by The Ramsar Convention Secretariat and the Environmental Ecosystem Research Foundation this past summer 2014.

International Exchange Program and Conference: All expenses will be paid through secured project funding. Two (2) representatives from each selected center will travel to the host center (in either the US or Russia) and explore a set of shared topics intended to provide each center with best practices and lessons learned across a broad range of subjects including, but not limited to, climate change, invasive species, loss of wetlands to agriculture and development, increased use of water, wetland biodiversity, functions, benefits and biodiversity conservation. During the visits, participants will have the opportunity to meet with the wider community around the wetland education center.

During autumn 2015, the international exchange program will culminate with a final conference and webinar at The Wetlands Institute in Stone Harbor, New Jersey. This three-day conference will consist of updates from all partners on their exchange visits, discussion about key findings and conclusions, a field trip to explore the wetland center and surrounding wetlands, and smaller break-out workshops to pull together materials that can be compiled into a final manual focused on producing materials highlighting best practices related to public education and engagement in wetland centers. During the workshops, webinars will be conducted that invite other members of the WLI network, and any other interested parties outside of the WLI network, to participate in roundtable discussions regarding wetland issues common to both the US and Russia, as well as, experiences and best practices used to engage the public in education and outreach activities effectively opening up broader input and dialogue that allows for a more internationally representative approach and a stronger more inclusive best practices manual.

Methodology for Use of Social Media, Data Sharing Tool and Outreach Materials: Effective social media, data sharing and outreach materials are valuable tools for achieving education and outreach goals within the outdoor and environmental education fields. Participating wetland centers will be asked to share examples and assist in the creation of a proven methodology for successful usage of social media (such as Facebook, VKontakte, Odnoklassniki, Twitter, Skype, Instagram, Four Square, Pinterest), data sharing tools (such as organization websites, Google Docs, Dropbox) and outreach materials (such as leaflets, brochures, static and dynamic displays) as a way to best engage the surrounding community and schools in wetland education.

Selected centers will explore different techniques and strategies regarding public education programs, volunteer coordination, wetland field studies, nature interpretation, exhibit creation, formal education programs and other common themes and/or challenges shared by selected wetland centers. It is intended that the best of these techniques and strategies will be compiled, uploaded, and shared on TWI, WLI, and WIR websites for broader international dissemination of this proven methodology for the effective use of social media, data sharing and outreach materials.

Manual for Integrating Proven Techniques into Public Education and Engagement at Wetland Centers: Based on shared US and Russian experiences through the international exchange program, conference and webinar workshops, a final manual will be produced for advising wetland education centers in both the US and Russia on implementing best practices and proven techniques for public education and engagement as they pertain to wetland education. The manual will be available in both Russian and English, will be useful to wetland center practitioners across the globe, and will work to highlight wetland issues that are common to not only the US and Russia, but countries around the world and will complement the existing *Handbook on Best Practices for Planning, Design and Operation of Wetland Education Centres*.

For more information on the participating project partners, please visit our websites at:

The Wetlands Institute (TWI): www.wetlandsinstitute.org

Wetland Link International (WLI): www.wli.org.uk

Wetlands International Russia (WIR): www.russia.wetlands.org

Application Guidelines

US Eligibility: Eligibility for inclusion in the *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands* project is open to all continental US non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and municipal and/or state government operated wetland centers able to meet the project selection criteria below. Due to State Department restrictions for this project, no participating US centers may be from federal government operated wetland centers.

Russia Eligibility: Eligibility for inclusion in the *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands* project is open to all Russian wetland centers capable of meeting the project selection criteria below.

Selection Criteria: In addition to the specific eligibility requirements listed above, applicants must also meet the following criteria:

- Have a wetland education center structure at a wetland site that regularly conducts onsite environmental education and/or CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness) activities to a wide range of audiences.
- Have a willingness to share organization materials as they pertain to outreach events, public education programs, nature interpretation, public engagement, and other materials related to engaging the public in wetland conservation and education.
- For Russian applicants, have a good working knowledge of the English language.
- For US applicants, have a willingness to learn a few basic Russian language phrases.
- Be able to provide at least one (1) lead contact for the project and two (2) applicants capable of participating in the international exchange program with up-to-date travel documentation, including passport with at least 12 month expiry and no restrictions on obtaining a visa.

- Be prepared to put at least six (6) weeks of organization staff time towards participation in the project. For (2) participating staff, this includes one (1) week to host partner organization, one (1) week to visit partner organization, plus one (1) week for final conference, project preparation and reporting.
- Be able to arrange local accommodation and transport for their visiting partners from either the US or Russia. (Funding for all travel expenses is included as part of participation in the project.)

Deadline: **Applications must be received by Friday, January 16, 2015**
 Notification of Acceptance: February 2015
 US to Russia Exchange Visits Occur: April – June 2015
 Russia to US Exchange Visits Occur: September – November 2015

US Application: US applications can be downloaded at: www.wetlandsinstitute.org

Russian Application: Russian applications can be downloaded at: www.russia.wetlands.org

How to Apply: Download the appropriate application and submit via standard mail, fax or email to:

US Applications

Lenore Tedesco / Brooke Knapick
 The Wetlands Institute
 1075 Stone Harbor Boulevard
 Stone Harbor, New Jersey 08247
 United States of America
 Fax: 609-368-3871
 Email: education@wetlandsinstitute.org

Russian Applications

Irina Kamennova
 Wetlands International Russia Program
 Nikoloyamskaya St. 19 Building 3
 Moscow, 109240
 Russian Federation
 Fax: 7-495-727-0938
 Email: IKamennova@wwf.ru

US Questions: Please contact Lenore Tedesco or Brooke Knapick at education@wetlandsinstitute.org.

Russian Questions: Please contact Irina Kamennova at IKamennova@wwf.ru.

Wetland Center Network Questions: Please contact Chris Rostron at chris.rostron@wwt.org.uk.



Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands Participant Application

Each wetland center applying for participation in the *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands* project must submit a completed application, which includes the requested organization and participant information, answers to the application questions, and a signed letter of support from the organization’s executive director or lead administrator.

All US centers, please submit completed applications to The Wetlands Institute. All Russian centers, please submit completed applications to Wetlands International Russia. Application should be word or pdf format and standard mail, fax, or emails are all accepted for submission. Specific details about the *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands* project can be found by visiting the following websites: www.wetlandsinstitute.org or www.russia.wetlands.org.

Application Deadline: Friday, January 16, 2015

Contact Information for US Applicants

Lenore Tedesco / Brooke Knapick
The Wetlands Institute
1075 Stone Harbor Boulevard
Stone Harbor, New Jersey 08247
United States of America
Fax: 609-368-3871
Email: education@wetlandsinstitute.org

Contact Information for Russian Applicants

Irina Kamennova
Wetlands International Russia Program
Nikoloyamskaya St. 19 Building 3
Moscow, 109240
Russian Federation
Fax: 7-495-727-0938
Email: IKamennova@wwf.ru

Organization Information

Address (Include Organization Name)

Director/Administrator Name _____

Population Served _____

Organization Website _____

Organization Phone _____

Participant Contact Information

Project Participant 1

Name _____

Position _____

Email Address _____

Project Participant 2

Name _____

Position _____

Email Address _____

Instructions: Please type the answers to the following questions in a word or pdf document. The application should not exceed two pages, minus attachments.

Question 1: Summarize why your organization would like to participate in the *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands* project.

Question 2: What does your organization plan to contribute to the *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands* project? What does your organization hope to gain through participation in this project?

Question 3: Describe your organization's geographical location, general demographic information of program participants/visitors, the environmental education and/or CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness) activities conducted onsite, the approximate number of people served through organization programs, and any additional information regarding your organization that would be helpful to the project selection committee.

Attachments:

Signed Letter of Support from Organization Executive Director or Lead Administrator



Dear Organization Executive Director or Lead Administrator:

Having been awarded a grant through the US State Department's US-Russia Peer-to-Peer Dialogue Program, The Wetlands Institute (TWI), Wetland Link International (WLI) and Wetlands International Russia (WIR) have teamed up to generate a beneficial international dialogue between wetland centers in the US and Russia. This project, *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands*, seeks to identify the shared challenges of those working in wetland education and outreach throughout the US and Russia and assemble cases of best practice and delivery. This project is currently seeking six (6) wetland centers, divided equally between the US and Russia, to participate in an international exchange program, develop a proven methodology for use of social media, data sharing and outreach materials, and produce a final manual for advising wetland centers on the best practices for public education and engagement as they pertain to wetland education.

Participation in the *Russia-USA Wetland Center Exchange Program: Linking People and Wetlands* project requires that your organization be able to: 1) provide at least one (1) lead contact for the project and two (2) applicants capable of participating in the international exchange program with up-to-date travel documentation, including passport with at least 12 month expiry and no restrictions on obtaining a visa; 2) put at least six (6) weeks of organization staff time towards participation in the project which includes one (1) week to host partner organization, one (1) week to visit partner organization, plus one (1) week for final conference, project preparation and reporting; and 3) arrange local accommodation and transport for their visiting partners from either the US or Russia.

This is an exciting opportunity seeking to identify and solve wetland issues that are common to not only the US and Russia, but countries around the world. We are very pleased that your organization is applying for participation in this project and we look forward to the possibility of working with you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Lenore Tedesco
Executive Director
The Wetlands Institute

Brooke Knapick
Education Director
The Wetlands Institute

Chris Rostron
Head
Wetland Link International

Irina Kamennova
Senior Project Coordinator
Wetlands International Russia Program

I have read the above and support participation in this project:

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____