

New York/New Jersey Area Common Application Form Cover Sheet

Date of application: 8.12.2026

Name of organization to which grant would be paid. Please list exact legal name:

National Audubon Society/DBA Audubon Connecticut and New York

Purpose of grant: General Operating Support, Constitution Marsh Sanctuary and Audubon Center

Address: P.O. Box 174, Cold Spring, NY 10516

Telephone: 845-265-2601 *Fax:* *E-mail:* Rebecca.schultz@audubon.org

Executive Director: Michael Burger

Contact person and title (if not executive director): Rebecca Schultz, Center Director

Is your organization an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit?: Yes ☒ or No ☐

If no, please explain: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Grant request: \$ 20,000

Check one (based on the organization's priorities and the funder's guidelines):

General support ☒

Total organizational budget (for current year): \$359,477

Dates covered by this budget (mo/day/year): July 1 2026 - June 30 2027

A PROPOSAL TO THE VIDDA FOUNDATION*Conservation, Education, and Community Engagement at Constitution Marsh***Summary**

Audubon Connecticut and New York respectfully requests an increased renewal grant of \$20,000 from the Vidda Foundation to support the Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary and its Hudson Valley properties.

Support from the Vidda Foundation has been an incredible support to Constitution Marsh over the past decade. Poised to increase our impact and expand our programming this year, an increased investment from Vidda would go a long way in helping us reach our vision of growth and capacity under Audubon's ambitious Flight Plan goals, improving our operations and reaching more young people and community members.

Background

History and Mission. As part of the National Audubon Society network and one of Audubon Connecticut and New York's six regional Conservation Action Centers, Constitution Marsh is a unique tidal wetland habitat located in the Lower Hudson Valley. The 270-acre site is designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA), a Significant Coastal Fish and Wildlife Habitat, and a New York Scenic Area of Statewide Significance. Constitution Marsh Audubon Sanctuary is managed alongside three other Audubon New

York sites in the Hudson Valley—RamsHorn-Livingston Sanctuary, Rheinstrom Hill Sanctuary, and Buttercup Farm Sanctuary.

The four sites fall under the umbrella of the Hudson Valley Center and Sanctuaries, working under one comprehensive vision and implementation plan. These properties serve as local living laboratories for innovative conservation practices, field biology, and for connecting our communities with conservation action. Each property, with their unique ecosystem, serve distinct roles that align to the Audubon's strategic vision Flight Plan. Each year, Constitution Marsh staff work to achieve the following goals:

- **SUPPORT RESIDENT AND MIGRATORY BIRDS AND WILDLIFE** through habitat management and stewardship of our four Hudson River Valley Audubon Sanctuaries: Constitution Marsh, Rheinstrom Hill, RamsHorn-Livingston, and Buttercup Farm;
- **FOSTER COMMUNITY CONSERVATION** through citizen science programs, climate action plans, and other conservation education initiatives that support our habitat and bird conservation work on our Sanctuaries and the communities that surround them.; and
- **MENTOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF CONSERVATIONISTS** through our renewed focus on mentoring early professionals in habitat management, site stewardship, community outreach and engagement, environmental education, and professional networking.

Organization Need: Audubon stewards four unique Hudson Valley properties totaling 2,500 acres of critical and diverse habitat. Constitution Marsh serves as a nursery, refuge, and home for fish, scarce or endangered wetland plants, diverse wildlife, and at least 177 species of birds—many of them species of conservation concern. We invite residents to directly engage with the region's unique and threatened habitats and take conservation action on behalf of birds and communities.

Population Served: Constitution Marsh serves aims to reach new and more diverse community members and to create a ladder of engagement for the next generation of conservation advocates. That ladder begins with our youngest community members and extends to engage high school students and adults, providing multiple age-appropriate options for everyone to learn and engage in conservation action. Audubon aims to embed diversity, equity, and inclusion into the fiber of our work. We mindfully partner with communities that reflect the demographic diversity of the Lower Hudson Valley region and who are underserved.

Current Programs and Accomplishments: Constitution Marsh serves as the hub of Audubon New York's conservation and community engagement activity in the Hudson Valley. Core programs and recent accomplishments across our four sanctuaries include:

1. Building environmental knowledge, career skills, and community connections for the next generation.
2. Invasive species management.
3. Bird-friendly forest management.

4. At-risk bird species monitoring.
5. Site-specific climate impact field work.

See attached evaluation report for more information on accomplishments this past year.

Staffing: The Hudson Valley Audubon sites are overseen by Center Director Rebecca Schultz, with additional support of the Land Steward, David Decker, and a Conservation Program Manager, Lexi Klahn. Staff are building on the strong foundation established over the past several years by expanding our program reach, strengthening connections with our communities, welcoming more visitors through our pre-registered parking system, and continuing to grow our mentoring program.

Organizational Relationships: CMACS maintains a diverse network of partners that helps sustain and deliver programming, including the Audubon network of National, state, and local chapters, centers, and staff; Lower Hudson and Capital Mohawk Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs) and the State Invasive Species Advisory Council (ISAC); New York State Department of Environmental Conservation; New York State Office of Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation; The City of Beacon Recreation Department; Boscobel Restoration; Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve; Scenic Hudson; and Waterman Bird Club.

Funding Request

A \$20,000 grant from the Vidda Foundation in 2027 will help Constitution Marsh increase its capacity and impact as we continue to build and implement our vision for the Hudson Valley Center and Sanctuaries.

Upcoming work and key objectives include:

CAPACITY BUILDING and CENTER IMPROVEMENTS

1. As we continue implementing our action plan, our focus remains on transforming Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuary into a true Conservation Action Center that inspires and empowers people to take action for birds, wildlife, and the habitats they depend on. By aligning our work with Audubon's Flight Plan, we are building the capacity to reach more people, deepen our conservation impact, and create meaningful pathways for community members of all ages to connect with nature and contribute to local conservation efforts.
2. We have expanded opportunities for our community to engage in meaningful conservation action through volunteer projects, public programs, citizen science initiatives, and youth conservation education. To increase public access to the Marsh while protecting its sensitive resources, we offer a limited parking reservation system that welcomes visitors back to the grounds in a managed and sustainable way. We look forward to continuing to grow this program and creating even more opportunities for people to connect with nature, participate in conservation, and support the stewardship of the Marsh.

3. We continue to invest in repairs and upgrades that enhance the visitor experience, improve staff safety, and expand access to our programs. Over the coming year, our primary focus is installing new heating and cooling systems throughout the building to provide a safer and more comfortable environment, particularly during the increasingly frequent extreme weather events experienced in our region. We are also working to improve trail accessibility, update trail signage, and enhance overall property safety to ensure a welcoming and secure experience for all visitors.

CONSERVATION-BASED PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our programming focus is to expand and strengthen our community-based conservation initiatives and engage young professionals interested in conservation careers. Through education, stewardship, citizen science, and workforce development opportunities, we aim to empower community members of all ages to take meaningful conservation action. Specifically, we will:

1. Continue expanding our successful classroom-based Youth Climate Program, reaching four high schools, engaging 180 students, and supporting the development of eight student-led Climate Action Plans. This scalable program model has proven effective and is well positioned for replication at Audubon centers across the country. Through an action-oriented, solutions-focused, inclusive, and equitable approach, the program connects students with regional experts and empowers youth cohorts to identify local climate challenges, develop practical solutions, and implement meaningful climate action within their communities.
2. With added capacity, we will continue to invite our community to participate in our conservation action programs that include volunteer opportunities, public programming, citizen science programs, and youth conservation programming. Outreach includes both school and public programming that explores sea level rise and its effects on the Hudson River Estuary; Forestry management classes and workshops at Rheinstrom Hill; Climate Action; Audubon New York's signature *For the Birds!* education program; volunteer programs that focus on conservation action; bird walks; Community-based programming; and the annual Teatown Hudson River Eagle Fest.
3. We are growing our internship program over the next several years, utilizing our properties as living laboratories that students are able to utilize to gain skills to careers in conservation. We will host one Student Conservation Association member for 10 months, focusing on Climate Summit instruction, programming, and stewardship across the four Hudson Valley Sanctuaries. These interns receive intensive mentoring from CMACS staff and gain access to additional certification, training, and networking opportunities through service projects across the Hudson Valley, creating a real pipeline to conservation careers and action. At the end of their service, members receive an education stipend to help with school costs.

4. We will continue to grow our Young Professionals Volunteer Cohort, providing hands-on mentorship and professional development opportunities for emerging conservation leaders, aiming for at least 10 young mentees. Participants gain practical experience in habitat stewardship, ecological restoration, and field research through activities such as vegetation monitoring, bird surveys, and invasive species assessments. This program helps build the next generation of conservation professionals while advancing critical stewardship and research efforts across the Hudson Valley properties.

BIRD-FRIENDLY FOREST MANAGEMENT AT RHEINSTROM HILL AUDUBON CENTER

Guided by a management plan developed by Audubon scientists and professional foresters, the project uses targeted forest management practices, including the removal of unhealthy tree stands, to create patches of young forest habitat. These areas provide critical nesting, foraging, shelter, and breeding opportunities for songbirds and other wildlife species of conservation concern, such as the Wood Thrush, Veery, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Blue-headed Vireo, Ovenbird, Black-and-white and Blackburnian Warblers.

This year, we will:

- Maintain our community outreach initiative at Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Sanctuary.
- Allow Rheinstrom Hill to serve as a living demonstration site where visitors can learn about the importance of active forest management, the role of young forest habitat, and strategies for building climate-resilient forests.
- Through workshops and field-based trainings, we are sharing these practices with private landowners, conservation professionals, and community members, helping to expand forest stewardship efforts across Columbia County and the broader Hudson Valley landscape.
- With the Audubon Forestry team, increase our acreage for our forest demonstration sites to improve habitat for priority forest birds.
- Maintain the NY DEC's DMAP program at Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Sanctuary to control overabundant deer populations that lead to forest habitat degradation.

BUTTERCUP FARM GRASSLAND BIRD HABITAT

At 641 acres, Buttercup is an area of diverse habitats with rolling, open grasslands, second growth and more mature woodlands, a former orchard and a marshy, flooded woodland. Working with community volunteers, we have used the Buttercup Farm Sanctuary as a monitoring site for grassland nesters such as meadowlarks, kestrels, and bobolinks.

Moving forward:

1. We will be working in partnership with The Bobolink Project, we will begin implementing habitat enhancements across our 97-acre grassland to improve conditions for bobolinks and other ground-nesting and open-field bird species. Planned efforts include refining our mowing management practices, expanding and connecting existing field areas through the removal of select hedgerows and windrows, and creating larger, more contiguous tracts of suitable habitat. We will also implement a streamlined bird monitoring protocol to improve the efficiency and consistency of bobolink surveys, helping us better track habitat use and inform future management decisions.
2. Continue to actively engage community members in the stewardship efforts in our newly established volunteer cohort to supporting our habitat restoration, invasive species management, monitoring efforts, and other conservation activities across the property. By providing meaningful, hands-on opportunities to contribute to local conservation, we are fostering a stronger community of environmental stewards while expanding our capacity to protect and enhance ecological resources.

CONSTITUTION MARSH INVASIVE SPECIES AND SEA LEVEL RISE MITIGATION

Wetland habitats, including the tidal marshes of Constitution Marsh and the tidal swamp of RamsHorn-Livingston Sanctuary, play a critical role in protecting and improving water quality, providing habitat for a wide variety of wildlife, and helping to buffer the impacts of sea-level rise and other climate-related changes. However, these ecologically significant habitats face growing threats from invasive species and the effects of climate change, including rising water levels. Addressing these challenges is essential to maintaining the health, resilience, and biodiversity of these wetlands for future generations. In 2027, we will:

1. Aim to eradicate the remaining patches of *Phragmites australis* found in Constitution Marsh and Ramshorn Livingston Sanctuaries.
2. Survey for and manage the newest invasive species arrival of small carpet grass at Ramshorn Livingston Audubon Sanctuary.
3. Work with regional partners and experts to address sea-level rise and the disturbance to marsh bird species using both Constitution Marsh and Ramshorn Livingston Sanctuaries.

Evaluation

CMACS staff will measure effectiveness of the above conservation and engagement activities via the following metrics:

- # of acres treated to manage invasive species at Constitution Marsh, Rheinstrom Hill, and Ramshorn Livingstone Audubon Sanctuaries.
- # of acres of forest brought under bird-friendly management for demonstration and training at Rheinstrom Hill Audubon Sanctuary.
- # of acres of shrub and early successional forest converted to grassland fields at Buttercup Farm Audubon Sanctuary.
- Bird and wildlife monitoring that leads to long term data on regional species prevalence and the impact of habitat management techniques at Constitution Marsh, Rheinstrom Hill and Buttercup Farm Audubon Sanctuaries.
- # of Youth Climate Summit participants on the impact of their action plans.
- # of interns, K-12 youth, and adults engaged in education, community engagement, and stewardship activities.

Center-based activity and goals are mapped at the beginning of each fiscal year and progress is tracked quarterly through a National Audubon Society database.

Conclusion

The Vidda Foundation's consistent partnership with Constitution Marsh over the past ten years has been invaluable as we have weathered challenges brought on by both the COVID crisis and climate change. Now positioned to deepen our impact on the broader community, we hope Vidda will consider a renewed grant as we look to the next phase of work at CMACS.

Attachments

1. [National Audubon Society Audited Financial Statement and Annual Report](#) (Linked)
2. Constitution Marsh FY27 Budget (FY26 Actuals not yet available)
3. [Audubon New York/CT Advisory Board](#) (linked)
4. National Audubon Society IRS 501c3 Letter
5. Constitution Marsh Key Staff Bios

Constitution Marsh Audubon Center and Sanctuaries

Budget 27

Revenue

Total Contributions	147,428
Earned Income	5,000
Spending Appropriation	7,188
National and State Transfers	199,861
Total Revenue	359,477

Expenses

Salaries	198,478
Communications Allowance	622
Full-time Fringe	53,589
Total Personnel	252,690

Non-Personnel

Employee Travel	1,200
Mileage	500
Meetings	2,000
Local Board Meeting	250
Catering	5,000
Postage	1,200
Gas & Electricity	5,000
Refuse & Recycling	756
Telephone	5,004
Insurance	8,168
Credit Card Fees	400
License, Permit & Fees	250
Printing	1,000
Maintenance - General	9,996
Maintenance - Security	500
Office Supplies	500
Building Supplies	500
Education Materials	1,000
Animal Care	50
Support Services Allocation	63,513
Total Non-Personnel	106,787
Total Expenses	359,477
Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	0



IRS Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

P.O. Box 2508
Cincinnati OH 45201

In reply refer to: 0248164828
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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY INC
% MARYBETH HENSON
225 VARICK ST 7TH FLOOR
NEW YORK NY 10014



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Person to Contact: Tonya Morris
Toll Free Telephone Number: 1-877-829-5500

Dear Taxpayer:

This is in response to your request of Oct. 29, 2012, regarding the tax-exempt status of National Audubon Society Inc..

Our records indicate that a determination letter was issued in November 1972, granting this organization exemption from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Our records also indicate this organization is not a private foundation within the meaning of section 509(a) of the Code because it is described in section(s) 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi).

Donors may deduct contributions to this organization as provided in section 170 of the Code. Bequests, legacies, devises, transfers, or gifts to the organization or for its use are deductible for Federal estate and gift tax purposes if they meet the applicable provisions of sections 2055, 2106, and 2522 of the Code.

Please refer to our website www.irs.gov/eo for information regarding filing requirements. Specifically, section 6033(j) of the Code provides that failure to file an annual information return for three consecutive years results in revocation of tax-exempt status as of the filing due date of the third return for organizations required to file. We will publish a list of organizations whose tax-exempt status was revoked under section 6033(j) of the Code on our website beginning in early 2011.

If you have any questions, please call us at the telephone number shown above.

0248164828

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NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY INC
% MARYBETH HENSON
225 VARICK ST 7TH FLOOR
NEW YORK NY 10014

Sincerely yours,

Richard McKee

Richard McKee, Department Manager
Accounts Management Operations

CONSTITUTION MARSH STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

Rebecca Schultz, Center Director

Rebecca has been with Constitution Marsh and Audubon since 2010, and has served as Center Director at Constitution Marsh since 2023. Rebecca previously served as Interim Center Director, Senior Center Manager, and before that, Education Manager. She has an MA in Environmental Conservation Education from NYU and BA in Cultural Anthropology. She has served as a US Peace Corps volunteer, working as a Youth Developer in the central region of Ukraine. Rebecca's main goal is to develop education and citizen-science programs on and off-site that exchange knowledge, foster appreciation and further develop an ethic of conservation within the community.

Lexi Kahan, Program Manager

Lexi joined Audubon's staff in January 2025. Lexi interned at Constitution Marsh in 2021 as an Americorps member through SCA, serving in that role for six months. Prior to joining the staff, Lexi was an Assistant Manager for an educational farm at Stamford Museum and Nature Center in Connecticut. Lexi received her BS in Biology and Psychology from James Madison University in 2021, and has also worked with the US Forest Service.

Additional Staff

Constitution Marsh and properties is also staffed by Land Steward, David Decker and several seasonal interns. And, as shared in our proposal, we are excited to be adding to our capacity this year through the establishment of a program manager position. All Audubon Connecticut and New York centers and sanctuaries are supervised by Senior Director of Conservation Action Centers Kathryn D'Amico.