



Northern California Forests and Watersheds 2018 Request for Proposals (RFP)

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, March 22, 2018 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) in close cooperation with its U.S. Forest Service (USFS) federal partners, the Eldorado National Forest (ENF) and Lassen National Forest (LNF), are pleased to announce the Northern California Forests and Watersheds Program (Program) for the recovery of lands and watersheds degraded from the influences of past wildfire events. This funding opportunity will address the impact of two wildfires: Lassen National Forest's Storrie Fire and Eldorado National Forest's Power Fire. The Eldorado National Forest is also providing funding from USFS's greater Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration (CFLR) Cornerstone Project. Additionally, NFWF will also fund meadow restoration within the Eldorado and Lassen National Forests and throughout the Sierra Nevada meadows range referenced in the [Northern California Forests and Watersheds Restoration Strategy](#) (Restoration Strategy), which is a precursor to a Northern California Forests and Watersheds business plan.

Through active collaboration, NFWF and USFS established a [Restoration Strategy](#) which aims to provide targeted watershed scale projects to accomplish the highest return on conservation outcomes and return on investments.

Through this collaborative strategy, the goals of this competitive grant program are to:

- 1) Support projects that strategically address the impacts to the watersheds affected by these fires;
- 2) Identify and fund projects that provide sustainable and lasting ecological benefits to the forest;
- 3) Promote projects that provide additional efficiency and innovation to improve forest health; and
- 4) Among the projects identified, restore and protect cultural and tribal resources where necessary.

Overall, \$3.34 million is available for this 2018 RFP. Approximately \$2.8 million will be available to implement restoration actions within the watersheds affected by the Power and Storrie Fires, \$215,000 will be available for design and restoration implementation for Eldorado National Forest's CFLR Cosumnes and Power Fire watersheds, and \$325,000 will be available for Sierra Nevada meadow design, implementation, and other projects that benefit meadows throughout the Sierra Nevada. Successful proposals will address one or more of the Program's goals and priorities described below.

FUNDING FOCUS

Storrie Fire and Power Fire funds will be used exclusively for the Lassen and Eldorado National Forests' watersheds and ecosystems that were directly affected or have a nexus to the fire as noted in the [Restoration Strategy](#) and respective fire maps (Figures 1 and 2). Project activities are eligible in the affected watersheds, provided the activity has a direct nexus to a need resulting from, or exacerbated by, the fires.

Additionally, Eldorado National Forest's CFLR funds will be available for the Cat Creek-Middle Fork Cosumnes and Sopiago Creek-Middle Fork Cosumnes watersheds (Figure 2). ***UPDATED***

California meadows funding is applicable throughout the Sierra Nevada meadows range as referenced in the [Restoration Strategy](#) (Figure 3).

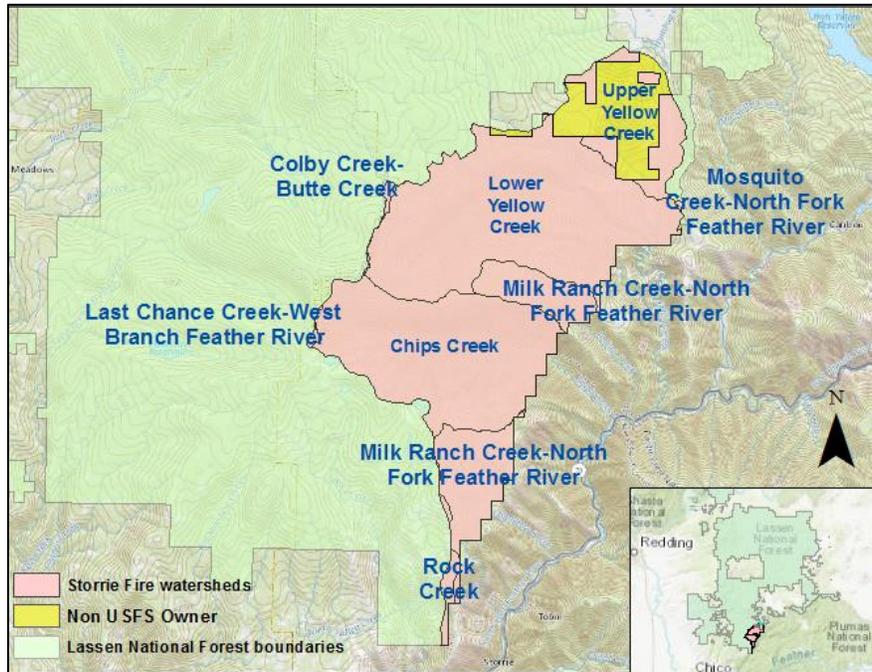


Figure 1. Lassen National Forest's map of the Storrie Fire's impacted and nexus watersheds.

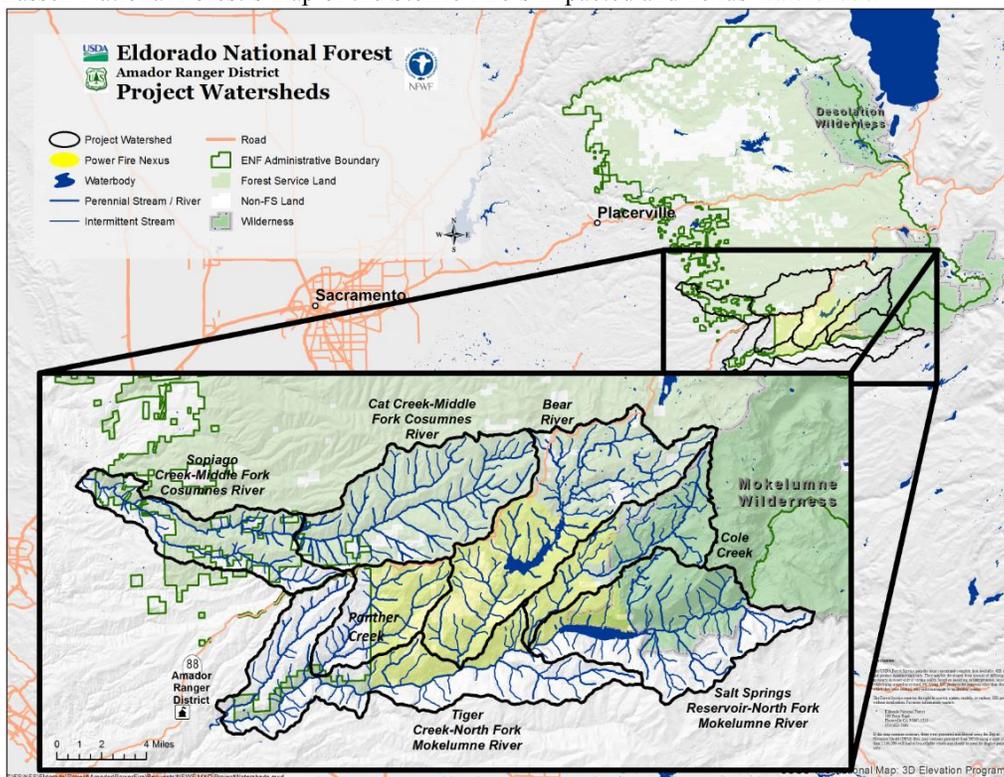


Figure 2. Eldorado National Forest's map of the Power Fire's impacted, nexus, and CFLR Cosumnes watersheds.

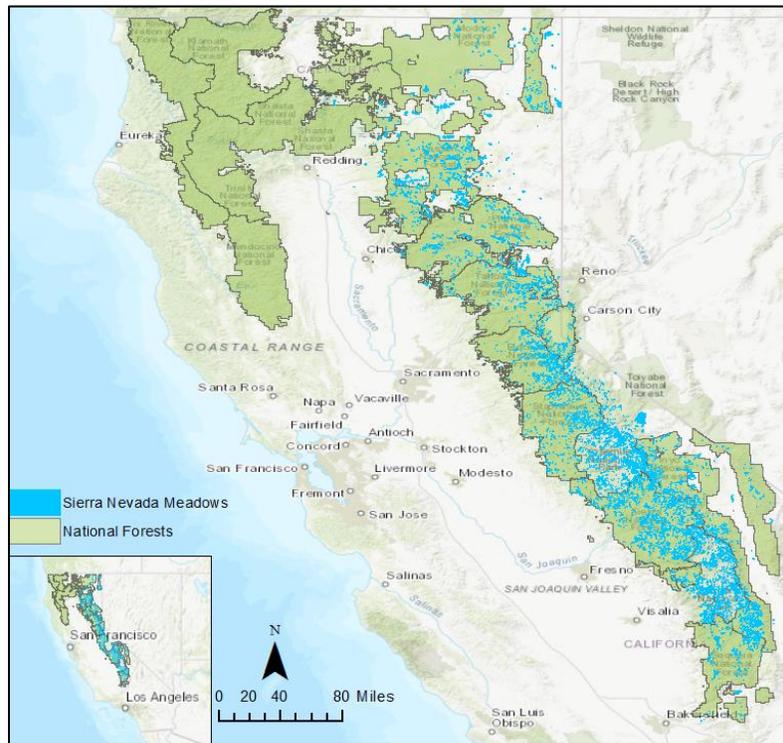


Figure 3. California National Forests and Sierra Nevada meadows ([Sierra Nevada Meadows Data Clearinghouse](#)).

ELDORADO AND LASSEN NATIONAL FORESTS' PRIORITIES

Eldorado and Lassen National Forests – Power and Storrie Fires

Grant funding will be awarded to planning and/or implementation projects designed to advance restoration or ecological resilience on the ENF or LNF. To be eligible for funding:

- Projects must conduct or inform the improvement, protection, or rehabilitation of ecosystems and watersheds within National Forest System lands impacted by the designated fire scars (Figures 1 and 2).
- Project descriptions must clearly describe the need for the proposed project as rendered necessary by the impacts of the fire where activities are focused.
- Project goals, objectives, and activities must provide a direct and practical contribution toward ENF or LNF restoration priorities as mentioned in the [Restoration Strategy](#).

Eldorado National Forest – CFLR Cornerstone

Grant funding will be awarded to planning and/or implementation projects designed to advance restoration or ecological resilience on the ENF. To be eligible for funding:

- Projects must conduct or inform the improvement, protection, or rehabilitation of ecosystems and watersheds within Eldorado National Forest's Cat Creek-Middle Fork Cosumnes and Sopiago Creek-Middle Fork Cosumnes watersheds (Figure 2). ***UPDATED***
- Project goals, objectives, and activities must provide a direct and practical contribution toward ENF restoration priorities as mentioned in the [Restoration Strategy](#).

Competitive proposals will address at least one of the Northern California Forests and Watersheds Restoration Priorities described below. A description of the goals and priorities of this Program can be found within the [Restoration Strategy](#); however general strategy descriptions and some examples of projects of interest by the ENF and LNF are highlighted in the [RFP Appendix](#).

Project and Geographic Priorities

The purpose of this Program is to restore ecological integrity and healthy functioning of watersheds and ecosystems affected by the Storrie and Power Fires. The Lassen and Eldorado National Forests, in conjunction with NFWF, have identified these watersheds as primary focal areas in order to maximize available resources and achieve the highest possible conservation outcomes.

Lassen National Forest's Priority Watersheds (Figure 4):

- 1) Chips Creek
- 2) Upper Yellow Creek
- 3) Lower Yellow Creek

Eldorado National Forest's Priority Watersheds (Figure 5):

- 1) Panther Creek
- 2) Bear River
- 3) Cole Creek

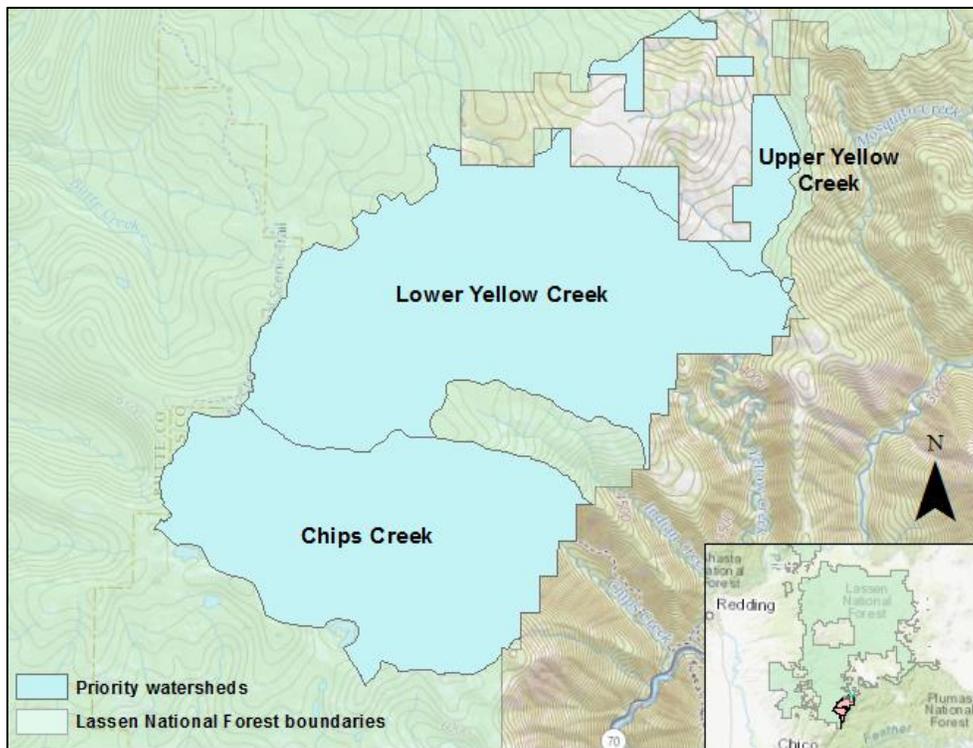


Figure 4. Lassen National Forest's Power Fire priority watersheds map.

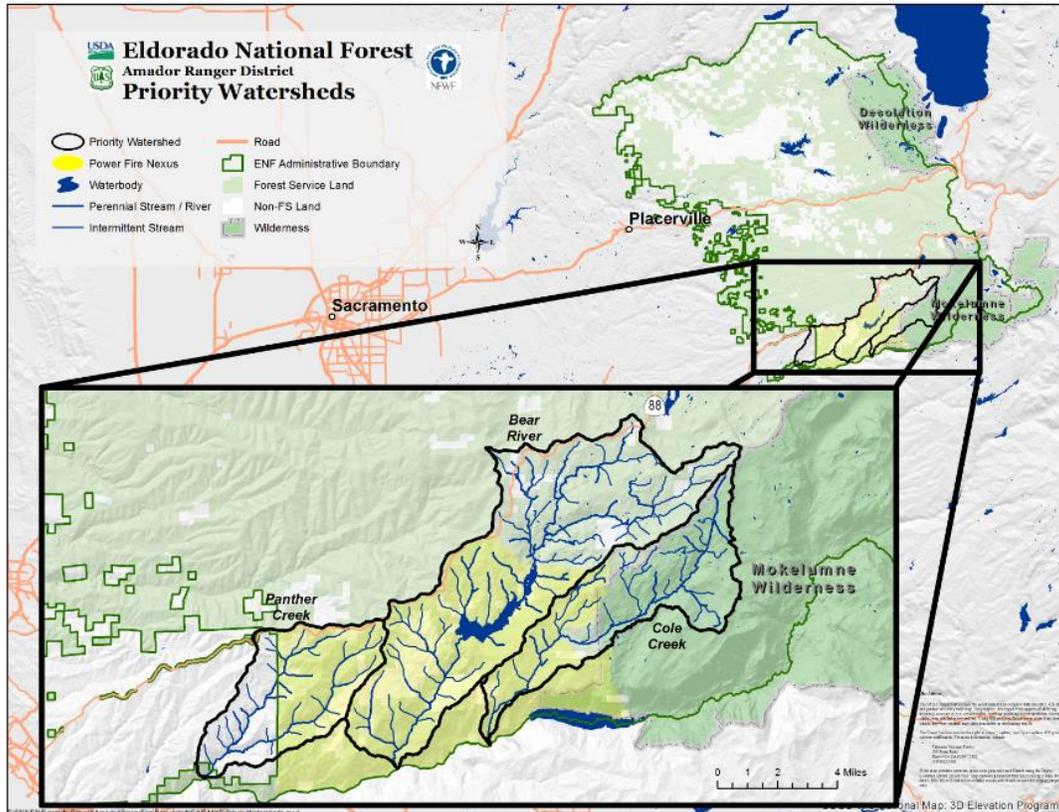


Figure 5. Eldorado National Forest’s Power Fire priority watersheds map.

Establishing a clear restoration strategy to restore these focus areas will improve forest health on a larger scale as opposed to individual non-contiguous segments. Areas outside of these focal areas are also eligible for funding provided the applicant demonstrates a clear nexus to addressing the needs resulting from the Storrie and Power Fires.

Eligible Projects

The USFS and NFWF have funding available for:

Watershed Restoration and Management

These include projects to:

- 1) Improve hydrologic connectivity and aquatic organism passage;
- 2) Remove invasive species threatening aquatic habitat or sensitive species;
- 3) Restore and/or enhance instream flow; and,
- 4) Create, maintain and/or improve existing watersheds, meadows, fens, riparian corridors, and instream habitats.

Species Management

These include projects specifically designed to benefit threatened and endangered species, or species of special concern, including but not limited to California spotted owl, Pacific fisher, Pacific marten, willow flycatcher, Lahontan cutthroat trout, and Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog. Restoration activities that benefit a suite of species, community, or habitat are also applicable.

Projects may:

- 1) Evaluate and/or restore or improve habitat specific to a species or suite of species of interest;

- 2) Perform research that improves the understanding of species/population needs within fire affected watersheds; and,
- 3) Inform and educate the public about the issues concerning these species and actions that can be taken to protect them.

Forest and Upland Restoration and Management

These include projects to:

- 1) Locate and/or remove invasive species;
- 2) Harvest native seed and/or propagate native plants in order to revegetate landscapes to restore natural population and species distribution, where appropriate;
- 3) Restore age class structure and reduce fuels to minimize risks from unnatural wildfire; and,
- 4) Revegetation of native plants in fire affected watersheds.

Recreational and Non-natural Features Management

This strategy includes projects to manage recreational and non-natural features such as trails, roads, campsites, and fuel breaks. Projects proposed must be able to illustrate a benefit to watershed restoration and recovery or ecosystem improvement.

Projects may include:

- 1) Field condition assessments and/or management recommendations to critical trails, roads, campsites, or fuel breaks;
- 2) Relocation, maintenance and/or improvement to degraded trails, roads, campsites, or fuel breaks;
- 3) Restoration of lands impacted from past fire management activities;
- 4) Implementation of best management practices to reduce invasive species, and/or pollutant loads (particularly those from sediment/erosion); and,
- 5) Restoration and prevention of non-USFS approved user-created trails, roads, or campsites.

Relevant and Beneficial Project Proposals

The [RFP Appendix](#) provides highlighted examples of immediate Program priority needs as identified by ENF and LNF staff. Additional background information for the example projects are referenced in the [RFP Appendix](#).

The Program welcomes and encourages all proposals that meet the Northern California Forests and Watersheds Goals and Priorities for the Power and Storrie Fires, particularly those that implement a multi-resource holistic approach to post-fire restoration, and/or provide additional benefits toward long-term effective management at a forest- or region-wide scale. Relevant and beneficial proposals for the Eldorado National Forest's CFLR watersheds and Sierra Nevada meadows are also welcome. For an expanded discussion of the Program goals and priorities, please review NFWF's [Restoration Strategy](#).

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NFWF Program Manager, Candace Leong, prior to submitting your proposal to discuss ideas, seek relevant project-related information such as priority locations, and ensure applicability of project proposals with Program objectives and needs of NFWF, ENF, and LNF.

Proposal Timelines and NEPA/Permits

All project costs and matching contributions must be expended within the project period of performance. Projects awarded through this funding opportunity are expected to be completed by summer 2020. Some larger-scale projects may warrant multiple funding requests. These requests will be considered per funding cycle. Multi-funding cycle projects must describe expectations for the project for each funding phase to qualify for consideration. For more guidance on project start and end dates, see the [Applicant Tip Sheet](#).

Applicants may submit more than one proposal, but each proposal submitted should have only one geographic focus (i.e. if you want to submit proposals for ENF, LNF, and Sierra Nevada meadow projects then you should submit separate proposals for each National Forest/regional area).

Grant recipients will be required to demonstrate the ability to fulfill the Program's contractual requirements to acquire applicable permissions and to ensure environmental and heritage resource compliance, as well as any regulatory permits or approvals, including National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA) requirements. Regulatory compliance measures should be included in the proposal budget and timeline.

OTHER PROJECTS FOR CONSIDERATION UNDER THIS RFP

Sierra Nevada Meadows

Beginning with this grant cycle, NFWF's Sierra Nevada meadows funding will be awarded through this Northern California Forests and Watersheds landscape RFP. Grant funding will continue to be awarded to planning, implementation, or other projects designed to advance meadow restoration or resilience within the Sierra Nevada meadows range. The Sierra Nevada meadows priority is to restore and protect mountain meadow ecosystems which serve as key habitat for fish and wildlife and provide hydrological benefits for people, such as increased groundwater storage, flow reliability, and reduced sedimentation. The goal of the Sierra Nevada meadows funding is to restore habitat and validate restoration benefits.

To be eligible for funding, projects must occur within California's Sierra Nevada meadows region, on public or private lands (Figure 3). While a mixed portfolio of projects is possible, preference will be given to projects that will advance recovery of key focal species, specifically, California spotted owl, willow flycatcher, Yosemite toad, and native trout including Lahontan cutthroat trout. In addition, projects located in watersheds with the potential to amplify benefits associated with restoration of fire-scarred areas on California's National Forests or are adjacent to or contiguous with previously restored meadows are of particular interest.

Competitive proposals will address the conservation and restoration of meadows and benefit the fish and wildlife that depend on this habitat as described in the [Restoration Strategy](#). Additional information can be found through NFWF's recently exited [Sierra Nevada Meadow Restoration Business Plan](#).

Strategies must include measurable outcomes and may include projects for:

- Implementing meadow restoration using a variety of innovative methods;
- Planning, technical design, and permitting to deliver NEPA ready projects;
- Monitoring to quantify hydrological benefits through changes in streamflow volume and groundwater storage;

*NEPA compliance may require significant time and resources to complete. Projects that propose on-the-ground actions for which NEPA processes have not yet been completed may consider including NEPA tasks within their overall project scope. Projects where NEPA tasks are expected should be discussed with NFWF's Candace Leong prior to submitting a proposal to evaluate implications to scope, budget, and timelines.

- Monitoring and surveys to quantify species benefits including but not limited to increases in population abundance;
- Engaging local communities and diverse stakeholders in meadow restoration; and
- Improving watershed health through meadow restoration that complements and/or amplifies restoration of fire scars on National Forests.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Northern California Forests and Watersheds Program has a list of metrics in Easygrants for applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible Program metrics are shown in the table below). If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact NFWF’s Candace Leong to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Please note that applicants should only reference project metrics that will be completed with NFWF funding and associated match during the project’s period of performance.

Project Activity	Project Metrics	Additional Guidance
Fish passage improvements	NorCal - Fish passage improvements - # passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of fish passage barriers rectified. In the notes section, state the type of barrier (i.e. dam, culvert, etc).
Fish passage improvements	NorCal - Fish passage improvements - Miles of stream opened	Enter the number of miles of stream opened.
Land, wetland restoration	NorCal - Land, wetland restoration - Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored. In the notes section, state how many acres are riparian vs wetland/meadow.
Removal of invasives	NorCal - Removal of invasives - Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored. Only list invasive removal acres that are not already listed in the land/wetland acres metric.
Restoring hydrology	NorCal - Restoring hydrology - Acres with restored hydrology	Enter the number of acres with restored hydrology.
BMP implementation for prescribed burns	NorCal - BMP implementation for prescribed burns - Acres public land burned	Enter the number of acres of public lands that have been treated by prescribed burning.
BMP implementation for road improvements	NorCal - BMP implementation for road improvements - Miles of road improved	Enter the number of miles of roads improved.
Green Infrastructure	NorCal - Green Infrastructure - miles trails developed/improved	Enter the number of miles of trails developed or improved.

Improved management practices	NorCal - Improved management practices - Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres under improved management. In the notes section, state how many acres are for fuels reduction that is not prescribed burn, include improved campsites, etc. Only list improved management acres that are not listed in the land/wetland acres metric.
Volunteer participation	NorCal - Volunteer participation - # volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers participating in projects.
Plant cultivation	NorCal - Plant cultivation - # seedlings propagated	Enter the number of seedlings propagated. In the notes section, state how many different native species are included.
Seed harvesting	NorCal - Seed harvesting - lbs harvested	Enter the number of pounds of seeds collected. In the notes section, state how many different native species are included.
Management or Governance Planning	NorCal - Management or Governance Planning - # plans developed	Enter the number of plans developed that had input from multiple stakeholders.
Restoration planning/design/permitting	NorCal - Restoration planning/design/permitting - Acres restored	Enter the number of acres for which planning, design, or permitting activities are being conducted under this project.

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Indian tribes, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Northern California Forests and Watersheds Program aims to award approximately \$3.34 million for 2018 grants. Eldorado National Forest has \$1.4 million available for Power Fire projects and \$215,000 available for CFLR projects. Lassen National Forest has \$1.4 million available for Storrie Fire projects. Additionally, NFWF has \$325,000 available for Sierra Nevada meadows projects.

- Grants will range from \$25,000 to \$250,000 per project. Project costs must be approved and expended within the project's start and end date. Projects are expected to be completed by summer 2020.
- Matching funds are required and will be a factor in the proposal evaluation. **Projects are expected to provide a 50% non-federal match to be competitive and the strongest projects will meet or exceed a 100% non-federal match.** For example, if you are requesting \$100,000, a 100% non-federal match is \$100,000. **Projects not meeting the match expectations will be considered on a limited case-by-case basis.**

UPDATED – Projects can be back-dated to February 1, 2017 in order to capture incurred costs and relevant match. Sierra Nevada meadows projects will need to provide a 1:1 non-federal project match due to its funding sources.

Matching contributions must be relevant to the project's work and used during the project's start and end date. Match may include non-federal cash, in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. Eligible indirect costs that are not being requested within the project's requested grant funding may be applied as match. Please review the NFWF [Indirect Cost Policy for Applicants](#) for specific information about using indirect costs as match.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by a Proposal Review Committee made up of representatives from NFWF, ENF, LNF, and other experts as needed. Grant awards will be made and managed by NFWF to successful applicants.

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Projects will be evaluated by:

Program Goals and Priorities - The proposal is consistent with the Program goals as described in the [RFP](#) and the [Restoration Strategy](#). The project deliverable(s) clearly contribute to a practical advancement toward those goals.

Technical Merit - Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. The proposal illustrates relevant experience, and/or assurance to engage with appropriate technical experts to ensure activities are thoroughly and appropriately designed and executed.

Transferability - Project has potential and a plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities or natural resource management applications, particularly in Northern California Forests, and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

Communication - Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences including but not limited to peer reviewed and professional publications and meetings.

Past Success - Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

Long-term Sustainability - Proposal should describe how outcomes and benefits are expected to be sustained over time, including long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Monitoring and Project Documentation - Project includes a plan for monitoring progress before, during, and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise. In addition, all projects will be expected to document relevant geospatial data associated with each activity or task performed, which will be delivered as part of the project reporting information provided to NFWF and USFS. Geospatial information will be consistent with established USFS geospatial data standards and format (e.g. data dictionaries, metadata formats).

Partnership - An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

Consistency with Overarching Federal or State Conservation Initiatives - If applicable, proposals may also address goals, priorities, and recommendations in context with broader federal, state, or regional conservation plans or strategies. Proposals should describe specifically how the project aligns with complementary conservation initiatives, and reference appropriate documentation.

Match – Matching contributions consists of non-federal cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the project during the project’s period of performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review. Matching contributions will be evaluated by comparing the total funding request and the non-federal dollar value (in-kind or cash) of the funds being provided by the applicant. Matching funds will be rated as follows:

Non-Federal Funding Match	Ranking Score
>100%	Excellent
75-100%	Great
50-74%	Good
0-49%	Fair

OTHER

Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally funded projects must be in compliance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance as applicable ([OMB Uniform Guidance](#)). The project budget must accurately reflect the actual costs necessary to complete all elements of the scope of work including any monitoring and environmental compliance costs.

Procurement – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not necessarily constitute NFWF’s express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services,

NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations [including but not limited to 2 CFR 200 (Uniform Guidance)]. Please note that Federal wage provisions (Davis-Bacon or Service Contract Act) are applicable. Davis-Bacon wage rates apply on all public works contracts in excess of \$2,000 and Service Contract Act wage provisions apply to service contracts in excess of \$2,500.

Publicity and Acknowledgment of Support – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF and USFS the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF and USFS’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients must also provide high-resolution photographs (minimum 300 dpi), geospatial data, and project narratives depicting the project.

Receiving Award Funds – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected to receive federal funding may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), National Historic Preservation Act, and other applicable federal laws. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with such Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Quality Assurance – If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees may be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation. Applicants should budget time and resources to complete this task. A QAPP template can be located at: <https://www.epa.gov/quality/sampling-and-analysis-plan-guidance-and-template-v4-general-projects-042014>.

Permits – Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct permit pre-application meetings with the appropriate administering agencies prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

Federal Funding – Federally funded projects must operate in compliance with the [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable to the applicant. The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

Dates are subject to change. Please check the Program page for the most current information at www.nfwf.org/norcal.

Open House at Eldorado National Forest Supervisor’s Office; February 14, 2018; 1-3pm PST
100 Forni Rd, Placerville CA

Open House at Lassen National Forest Supervisor’s Office; February 15, 2018; 10am-12pm PST
2550 Riverside Dr, Susanville CA

Applicant Webinar
Full Proposal Due Date

February 20, 2018; 1-3pm PST
March 22, 2018; 8:59pm
PST/**11:59 pm EST**

Review Period
Awards Announced

March - June 2018
Mid-August 2018

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Easygrants system.

- 1) Go to <https://easygrants.nfwf.org> to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
- 2) Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.
- 3) Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded [here](#).

An Applicant Tip Sheet is available for quick reference while you are working through your application and can be downloaded [here](#).

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF's [Applicant Information](#) page.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

Candace Leong
Manager, Northern California Forests
Candace.Leong@nfwf.org
415-593-8253

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk
Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail: 202-595-2497
Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.