



## SAGEBRUSH LANDSCAPES CONSERVATION PROGRAM 2019 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 by 11:59 PM Eastern / 9:59 PM Mountain**  
Applicant Webinar: **Wednesday, July 17<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 12:00 PM Eastern / 10:00 AM Mountain**

### OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals for projects that conserve, restore and enhance sagebrush and associated habitat. The objectives of the Sagebrush Landscapes Conservation Program are to support several strategic projects that accelerate and implement cross-jurisdictional management collaborations and/or provide transfer of knowledge and implementation of specific priority conservation practices including:

- Mesic area/wet meadow restoration
- Innovative and strategic management of annual invasive grasses in Idaho and Wyoming

Preference will be given to projects that accelerate adoption of the most cost effective and sustainable approaches that exhibit a high likelihood of success. The Sagebrush Landscapes Conservation Program will award approximately \$2.6 million. Major funding for this program comes from The Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services and the U.S. Forest Service.

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The geographic coverage of the program includes sagebrush landscapes in six different states: Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming.





## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Much of the sagebrush landscape is checked by mixed ownership. Generally speaking, throughout the west land ownership adheres to the following pattern: the lower water-rich properties tend to be privately owned, the more arid uplands are typically federally owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and lands located in upper watersheds are frequently managed by the U.S. Forest Service. When additional state land and other holdings are included, the ability to manage across a landscape becomes complex. Capacity to communicate and assist with management, restoration and enhancement of habitat will address conservation bottlenecks in communities throughout the west. Priority will be given to projects that include a focus on, restoration and enhancement of mesic wet meadows as well as projects in Idaho and Wyoming that result in a reduction of invasive annual grasses and maintenance/increase of desired perennial plants.

All proposals must specifically address how projects for which funds are requested will directly and measurably contribute to the accomplishment of program goals. The Sagebrush Landscapes Conservation Program seeks projects in the following program priorities:

### *1: Mesic Area and Wet Meadow Restoration (\$1.705 million available)*

Many of the species found in the sagebrush landscape are adapted to the arid climate and do not rely exclusively on access to water. However the benefits realized from mesic areas and wet meadows are critical during certain life stages of sagebrush species, including utilization by sage-grouse for brood rearing habitat and critical winter range for elk, mule deer and pronghorn. Threats to these systems include altered hydrology (digging stock ponds or "dirt tanks"), de-watering or diversion of water for irrigation elsewhere, historic eradication of beaver, and mismanagement of grazing which can lead to erosion issues and an ultimate lowering of the water table.

Techniques such as installation of rock structures or beaver mimicry are often site specific, and are just recently being adopted and formalized by many of the state and local land management agencies. There is a significant need for investment in these emerging techniques for both the transfer of knowledge and landscape level implementation. Additional practices may include managing adjacent uplands through grazing management or conifer removal to increase mesic area resiliency.

### *2: Management/local eradication of invasive annual grasses (cheatgrass, ventenata, or medusahead) on sagebrush rangelands in Idaho or Wyoming (\$645K available)*

Annual invasive grasses have impacted over 52 million acres of the American west reducing forage capacity of rangelands resulting in negative economic impacts on rural communities, altering and increasing catastrophic wildfire in both size and frequency and vastly altering wildlife habitat. To proactively address the spread of these species NFWF will consider project in Idaho and Wyoming that, apply integrated, ecologically-based invasive plant management strategies that result in a reduction of invasive annual grasses and maintenance/increase of desired perennial plants. Priority will be given to projects that:

- Are located within existing conservation priority areas (e.g., sage-grouse priority areas),
- Strategically address recent or low density annual grass invasion sites



- Contain monitoring and outreach/demonstration components that share results, successes and lessons learned with other land managers through a dedicated communications component with various publics and promote awareness about invasive annual grass management.

3: Conduct restoration and survey efforts for endangered Colorado plants, specifically the Colorado Hookless Cactus, DeBeaque Phacelia, and Parachute beardtongue. (\$250k available)

- Implement fencing enclosure projects to protect the endangered hookless cactus (*Sclerocactus glaucus*) and DeBeaque Phacelia (*Phacelia submutica*) in western Colorado.
- Conduct surveys for Parachute beardtongue (*Penstemon debilis*) in western Colorado.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Sagebrush Landscapes Conservation Program has provided a list of metrics in Easygrants for Full Proposal 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 do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Seth Gallagher ([seth.gallagher@nfwf.org](mailto:seth.gallagher@nfwf.org)) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Habitat Restoration – Mesic area restoration – # structures installed	In the Notes section of this metric please indicate what type of structure is being installed (i.e. beaver analog, one rock dam, etc.)
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Habitat Restoration – Mesic area restored – # acres (private)	Enter the number of acres restored and restoration technique completed on private lands
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Habitat Restoration – Mesic area restored – # acres (public)	Enter the number of acres restored and restoration technique completed on public lands
Habitat Improvement	Habitat Improvement – # acres under management plan as a result of grant supported efforts (private)	Specify improvements in Notes section (i.e. grazing plan, infrastructure development etc.) completed on private lands
Habitat Improvement	Habitat Improvement – # acres under management plan as a result of grant supported efforts (public)	Specify improvements in Notes section (i.e. grazing plan, infrastructure development etc.) completed on public lands
Habitat Restoration	Acres restored on private land	Specify the number of acres restored and the restoration activity in Notes section (i.e.



		sagebrush plug planting, grass re-seeding, conifer removal, etc.)
Habitat Restoration	Acres restored on public land	Specify the number of acres Restored and the restoration activity in Notes section (i.e. sagebrush plug planting, grass re-seeding, conifer removal, etc.)
Habitat Restoration	Acres of annual invasive grasses managed	Specify the number of acres of annual grasses treated
Habitat Restoration	Acres of trees removed (Removal of Invasives – Acres Restored)	Specify the number of acres of encroaching conifer removed

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Indian tribes, educational institutions, businesses, unincorporated individuals, 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.
- While federal agency partners are eligible applicants, program funds cannot be applied to federal salary.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Sagebrush Landscapes Conservation Program has approximately \$2.6 million available in funding for the 2019 RFP. NFWF anticipates awarding between 10-15 grants. Project duration may extend one to three years. For this cycle 1:1 non-federal match is required as in-kind or cash contributions. Please see the Program Tip Sheet for additional guidance.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

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.



**Program Goals and Priorities** – Project contributes to the program’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the Request for Proposal.

**Technical Merit** – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible.

**Cost-Effectiveness** – Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs in the proposed budget. The federal government has determined that a de minimis 10% indirect rate is an acceptable minimum for organizations without a NICRA, as such NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize ALL proposals with indirect rates above 10% for cost-effectiveness.

**Transferability** – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

**Communication** – Project includes a plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

**Funding Need** – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

**Conservation Plan and Context** – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

**Monitoring** – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

**Long-term Sustainability** – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

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

**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.)

## **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 [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable.

**Matching Contributions** – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the 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.

**Procurement** – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not 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.

**Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support** – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs 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 may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional 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 will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation ([www.epa.gov/quality](http://www.epa.gov/quality)). Applicants should budget time and resources to complete this task.

**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. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers 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** – 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 of activities are subject to change. Please check the [Sagebrush Landscapes Conservation Program](#) page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

Full Proposal Due Date	Wednesday, August 14 <sup>th</sup> by 11:59 PM, Eastern
<b>Applicant Webinar:</b>	Wednesday July 17 <sup>th</sup> at 12pm EST/10am MTN
Review Period	Late August – September
Awards Announced	Mid November

## HOW TO APPLY

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

1. Go to [easygrants.nfwf.org](http://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.
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](#).

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded [here](#). Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website's "Applicant Information" page ([www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx](http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx)).

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:  
*Seth Gallagher, Program Manager Rocky Mountain Region, [seth.gallagher@nfwf.org](mailto:seth.gallagher@nfwf.org)*  
*Daley Burns, Coordinator, Regional Programs, [daley.burns@nfwf.org](mailto:daley.burns@nfwf.org)*

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:  
Easygrants Helpdesk  
Email: [Easygrants@nfwf.org](mailto: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.