

RESTORE COLORADO



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, February 27th by 9:59 PM Mountain Time**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals for the inaugural year of the Restoration and Stewardship of Outdoor Resources and Environment (RESTORE) Colorado Program. Grants made through the RESTORE Colorado Program will focus on the restoration, enhancement and expansion of wildlife habitat throughout the state.

RESTORE Colorado is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and represents a unique partnership between Great Outdoors Colorado, the Gates Family Foundation, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, the Colorado Water Conservation Board and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

In 2020, up to \$2.5 million may be available for projects focusing on the following habitats and statewide priorities:

- River corridors, riparian areas and wetlands
- Eastern Colorado grasslands
- Sagebrush
- Big game winter range and migration routes
- Forestland projects in specific geographies

The partners developed the program as a means to accomplish wildlife habitat restoration, expansion, and improvement at-scale and provide opportunities for the proactive management of Colorado's public and private conservation lands for the greatest benefit to wildlife and local communities. While 2020 shall serve as a pilot year for this program, the partners expect to continue and expand in the future.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must specifically address how projects will directly and measurably contribute to the landscape-scale accomplishment of one or more of the program priorities as identified below. The program seeks projects that implement conservation practices directly on-the-ground and/or which increase organizational capacity to implement conservation activities.

Competitive projects may include but are not limited to:

River corridors, riparian areas and wetlands

- Enhancement and restoration of hydrology and connectivity for native species including aquatic habitat restoration and fish barrier installation/removal.
- Enhancement and restoration of riparian and wetland habitats, including managing grazing in riparian areas, invasive species removal, and mesic meadow restoration.

Eastern Colorado grasslands

- Enhancement and restoration of large intact tracts of eastern Colorado grasslands focusing on the habitat needs of species of greatest conservation need. Practices may include, but are not limited to:
 - Grassland restoration, improvement of range condition through a change in grazing or management practices;
 - Implementation of wildlife friendly grazing practices, including on expiring Conservation Reserve Program lands; and
 - Obstruction/tree removal to decrease grassland fragmentation.

Sagebrush shrublands:

- Enhancement and restoration of sagebrush rangeland habitat in priority areas for conservation for the Greater and Gunnison Sage-grouse. Projects may focus on one or more of the following practices:
 - Fence removal and modification;
 - Mesic meadow restoration such as installation of temporary wood grade structures or low impact restoration structures such as Zeedyk structures; and
 - Increasing forage quality and quantity (including management of invasive annual grasses and encroachment of woody species).

Big game winter range and migration corridors:

- Improvement of winter range and/or priority migration corridors (as identified by [Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Big Game Action Plan](#)) for elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep and moose within the boundaries of the [Colorado Habitat Partnership Program](#). Projects may focus on one or more of the following practices:
 - Fence removal and modification;
 - Transportation corridor enhancement; and

- Increasing forage quality and quantity (including management of invasive annual grasses and encroachment of woody species).

Forest Health

- Forestry projects that have a direct nexus to watershed health or habitat improvement. For this grant round, funding priority will be given to projects in the Wildland/Urban Interface (as defined by the [Colorado State Forest Service](#)) in three focal watersheds: (1) the Arkansas; (2) the South Platte; or (3) the Upper San Juan. Practices may include but are not limited to:
 - Revegetation with native plants in fire-affected watersheds;
 - Habitat restoration practices specific to a species or suite of species of interest, including evaluation of the effectiveness of practices for species conservation; and
 - Restoration of age class structure to improve forest habitat and restore natural fire regimes.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

All projects must occur entirely within the state of Colorado. Individual program priorities may have geographic focus areas based upon the physical location of the resource.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the RESTORE Colorado program has a list of metrics for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. NFWF will provide a separate guidance document to assist grantees in reporting consistent project metrics. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you cannot select an applicable metric, please contact Seth Gallagher (seth.gallagher@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
<i>River Corridors, Riparian Areas, and Wetlands</i>		
Water acquisitions or leases	Acre feet of water leased	Enter the acre feet of water leased
Fish passage improvements	# passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of fish passage barriers rectified
Fish passage improvements	Miles of stream opened	Enter the number of miles of stream opened
Restore stream geomorphology to increase aquatic species habitat	Miles restored	Enter instream miles restored.
Remove invasive species that threaten target fish species	Miles restored	Enter stream miles from which invasive species are removed.

Reconnect floodplain and reestablish native riparian vegetation	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored.
Installation of livestock exclusion fencing to protect riparian habitat	Miles of fencing installed	Enter miles of fencing installed to improve habitat.
Installation of barriers to prevent the migration of invasive aquatic species	# barriers created	Enter the number of barriers constructed to protect fish populations from invasive species.
Conduct translocation projects for target native fish species	# translocations and/or social attraction projects	Enter the number of reintroduction projects.
<i>Sagebrush/Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors</i>		
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 on private lands. Specify 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 on public lands. Specify 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	Specify the number of acres of encroaching conifer removed
<i>Forest Health</i>		
Habitat Restoration	Acres Restored	Acres of forest restored

<i>Widely Applicable Metrics</i>		
Expand species monitoring to new and additional sites	# sites being monitored	Enter the # sites being monitored
Volunteer participation	# volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers participating in projects

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c)3 organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies and other political subdivisions of the state, local and municipal governments, Indian tribes, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include businesses and unincorporated individuals.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- Program 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.
- Program funds will not be used for conservation easements or fee title acquisitions land.
- Program funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The RESTORE Colorado program expects to award approximately \$2.5 million in 2020 to 6 - 12 projects, with a minimum grant amount of \$100,000. Due to the diversity of federal, state and private funding sources involved in the RESTORE Colorado Program, match is encouraged but not required.

GRANT TIMELINES

A grant term shall not exceed three years in length. In 2020, funding priority will be given to projects that will be substantially completed by the end of 2021.

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 as identified in the RESTORE Colorado RFP, 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 (including NFWF’s [Rocky Mountain Rangelands](#) and [Southwest Rivers](#) Business Plans).

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.

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. NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize **ALL** proposals with indirect rates above 10% for cost-effectiveness.

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement projects and leverage additional funds to 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.)

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 detailed 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.

Key Personnel – Please include a brief description of all proposed project personnel and qualifications.

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 ([OMB Uniform Guidance](#)).

Due to the diversity of federal, state and private funding sources involved in the RESTORE Colorado Program, the partners are able to waive matching fund requirements for applicants. It is very important that other funding sources, both cash and in-kind, that are a part of the proposed applications are listed to help demonstrate community support and the full scope of the project.

Matching Contributions – Matching Contributions (match is encouraged but not required) consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance.

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 [quality assurance documentation](#) . 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 NFWF RESTORE Colorado page for the most current dates and information.

Applications Available	Thursday, January 9 th 2020
Applicant Webinar	Tuesday, January 14 th 2020 10:00 AM Mountain Time
Full Proposal Due Date	Thursday, February 27 th 2020 9:59 PM Mountain Time
Review Period	February – March 2020
Awards Announced	April 2020

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through NFWF’s Easygrants system.

1. Go to 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](#)" webpage.

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

Riparian Project Inquiries: Kirstin Neff, Southwest Rivers Program Manager,
Kirstin.Neff@nfwf.org

Sagebrush and Migration Project Inquiries: Seth Gallagher, Rocky Mountain Regional Program Manager, Seth.Gallagher@nfwf.org

General Inquiries: Daley Burns, Regional Program Coordinator, Daley.Burns@nfwf.org

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.