



NFWF



Columbia Basin  
Water Transactions  
Program

## **COLUMBIA BASIN WATER TRANSACTIONS PROGRAM** **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Pre-Proposal Applicant Webinar [[Register here](#)]: **Monday, February 10, 2020 at 10 AM PST**

Pre-Proposal Due Date: **Wednesday, March 4, 2020 by 8:59 PM PST**

Full Proposal Due Date: **Tuesday, May 5, 2020 by 8:59 PM PST**

### **OVERVIEW**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is requesting proposals to enhance, restore, and protect stream flows for key fish habitat in the Columbia Basin. The Columbia Basin Water Transaction Program (CBWTP) funds water transactions development and implementation in the United States portion of the Columbia Basin and is the largest instream flow restoration program in the country. With a strong focus on capacity support for on-the-ground partners, relationship building with water right holders, and flow restoration accounting, the program evolved from a proof-of-concept model to demonstrating measurable instream impacts and ecological outcomes. Since its inception in 2002, the CBWTP has implemented over 612 water transactions and secured over 12.2 million acre feet of water in flow-limited tributaries of the Columbia River Basin. The CBWTP works across portions of Oregon, Washington, Montana and Idaho, and its investments in water transactions have increased stream flows for the benefit of native fish species, including Pacific salmon, steelhead trout, and resident fish species.

NFWF is conducting an open proposal solicitation for organizations to develop water transactions with water right holders in priority watersheds of the Columbia Basin. NFWF will only accept proposals for programmatic support to develop water transactions under this solicitation, not for water acquisitions. Approximately \$1.8 million will be available for programmatic support, allowing for staff time, limited travel, supplies/materials, indirect, and other associated costs of developing a water transaction. If an entity is selected through this RFP, they will be eligible to apply for funding to pay for individual water transactions during the term of the grant through a competitive process. Funding for this program will be primarily provided by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) with additional support from Altria Group. A portion of the funding from BPA is dedicated to the areas of the Columbia River basin that are covered by the [Columbia Basin Fish Accords](#) with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. Proposals in these geographies should be separate from proposals for other geographies.

Historically, this program has not had an open, public solicitation for new implementers. From inception in 2002 to present, NFWF has worked with a set group of qualified local entities to develop and implement water transactions. NFWF is opening the solicitation to potentially expand the group of qualified local entities and help build capacity for those interested and ready to pursue water transactions within CBWTP priority areas. We encourage those entities that are interested to



NFWF



Columbia Basin  
Water Transactions  
Program

contact CBWTP program staff to discuss their eligibility and current qualifications to pursue and conduct transaction work. If an entity is considered qualified and receives a grant through this solicitation, they are eligible to submit water transaction projects through CBWTP’s closed water transaction solicitations. As water transactions are reviewed and deemed eligible to implement, additional funding may be made available during the grant period. More information on the water transaction solicitation process can be found [here](#).

**GEOGRAPHIC/SPECIES FOCUS**

Proposed activities must be located within the Columbia River Basin in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. A CBWTP priority geography is defined as a sub-basin with tributaries that have identified flow as a priority limiting factor affecting ESA listed species and is expected to benefit in order of priority:

1. ESA listed species in BiOp priority areas, similar to table below.
2. ESA listed anadromous species not specified above ([National Marine Fisheries Service](#) and [2019 CRS BiOp](#)).
3. ESA listed resident [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) or state species of concern (by one or more of [OR](#), [WA](#), [ID](#), [MT](#)).
4. Other fish or wildlife not listed above where a benefit can be tied to increased flows in a specific location.

**Table 1. Priority species under CBWTP listed from top to bottom.**

| Species Category   | Anadromous/Resident | ESA Status       |
|--|---------------------|------------------|
| <b>Populations of ESA listed species in BiOp priority areas</b>            |                     |                  |
| Upper Columbia River Steelhead   | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Upper Columbia River Spring-run Chinook Salmon                             | Anadromous          | ESA Endangered   |
| Snake River Steelhead  | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Snake River Spring/Summer Chinook Salmon                                   | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| <b>ESA listed anadromous species and populations not noted above</b>       |                     |                  |
| Upper Willamette River Chinook Salmon                                      | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Upper Willamette River Steelhead   | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Eulachon   | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Lower Columbia River Chinook Salmon  | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Snake River Fall Chinook   | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Snake River Sockeye Salmon   | Anadromous          | ESA Endangered   |
| Lower Columbia River Steelhead   | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Lower Columbia River Coho Salmon   | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Columbia River Chum Salmon   | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Middle Columbia River Steelhead  | Anadromous          | ESA Threatened   |
| Upper Columbia River spring-run, Okanogan River subbasin XN Chinook Salmon | Anadromous          | ESA Experimental |
| Middle Columbia River XN Steelhead   | Anadromous          | ESA Experimental |



NFWF



Columbia Basin  
Water Transactions  
Program

| <b>ESA listed resident or state species of concern (by one or more of OR, WA, ID, MT), populations other than listed above. Not all potential species listed.</b> |            |                |
|---|------------|----------------|
| Bull Trout  | Resident   | ESA Threatened |
| Pacific Brook Lamprey   | Anadromous | Not listed     |
| Pacific Lamprey   | Anadromous | Not listed     |
| Western Brook Lamprey   | Anadromous | Not listed     |
| Western River Lamprey   | Anadromous | Not listed     |
| Westslope Cutthroat Trout   | Resident   | Not listed     |
| Coho Salmon - Unspecified Population  | Anadromous | Not listed     |
| Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout   | Resident   | Not listed     |
| Westslope Cutthroat Trout   | Resident   | Not listed     |
| Redband Trout   | Resident   | Not listed     |
| Coastal Cutthroat Trout   | Resident   | Not listed     |
| Sockeye Salmon  | Anadromous | Not listed     |
| Rainbow Trout   | Resident   | Not listed     |
| Chinook Salmon  | Anadromous | Not listed     |

### **PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

CBWTP priorities are species and sub-basin focused, based on species of concern and flow limitations. Competitive programmatic proposals will address both factors while also demonstrating innovation, incorporating monitoring plans and connecting on a watershed level.

1. Species of concern: Proposals must showcase how the applicant will work toward addressing the conservation needs of one or more species of concern through water transaction implementation. See Table 1 above.
2. Flow limitations: The proposals must articulate an organizational competency in securing water for in-stream tributary flows at a location(s) where low flows are a limiting factor to fish survival, productivity and distribution and for the maximum reach of river legally and physically possible. Proposals should document the entity’s experience working in areas where significant seniority can be protected in-stream through state agency process or is contractually protectable instream at a time of year when needed to benefit fish and wildlife. Water quality for habitat is expected to improve due to increased quantity.
3. Innovation: Proposals should demonstrate how the applicant has implemented innovative methods that increase tributary flows or the development of new transaction strategies for tributary flow enhancement during critical periods for targeted species. The methods for securing water should be cost-effective in terms of local and regional markets and build long-term trust with water rights holders.
4. Monitoring: The proposal should document how compliance and implementation monitoring will be carried out and reported via the CBWTP’s [accounting framework](#) compliance



NFWF



Columbia Basin  
Water Transactions  
Program

monitoring forms. The proposal should include a description of long-term monitoring of water flow, and how benefit to fish and wildlife and water quality will be documented.

Based on final award and grant funding decisions, some awardees may also be asked to report additional summary project information through NFWF's web-based Water Calculator tool. NFWF staff will work with those awardees to minimize duplicate data collection and reporting across FRAF and Water Calculator requirements.

5. Watershed context: The proposal should describe collaborative efforts with other entities and document how opportunities for cost-sharing, data sharing and collaboration were considered and developed. The proposal should be based upon needs expressed in an existing subbasin plan, watershed assessment, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Recovery Plan in a specific targeted watershed, and describe how further strategic analysis of specific stream or reach water acquisition priorities have been or will be developed.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The CBWTP will award approximately \$1.8 million for Qualified Local Entity programmatic grants for the period beginning October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021. In collaboration with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) and BPA requirements, NFWF will grant up to 70% of the funding to entities with a focus on anadromous species and 30% of the funding to those projects with a focus on resident fish species.

There will be a pre-proposal and a full proposal stage for both new and previously qualified entities. Current qualified entities will submit a pre-proposal stating their interest in continuing with CBWTP and will be invited to submit a full proposal. If you are unsure if you are qualified, please contact the CBWTP Program Coordinator. New entities will need to complete a qualification form in the pre-proposal stage for review. If qualifications are considered adequate, the entity will be invited to submit a full proposal. Entities will only be considered qualified and eligible to submit water transaction projects if they are awarded a grant after the full proposal stage.

Grants will be awarded in two categories:

1. **Implementation grants**: Approximately \$1.6 million will be available for entities to develop, implement, and monitor water transactions (in accordance with our [flow accounting framework](#)). Entities include:
  - a. Existing qualified local entities: Grants will be awarded to existing qualified local entities to develop and implement new and previously developed water transactions, as well as monitor previously funded water transactions. Entities that were previously qualified into the program do not have to be re-qualified, however past performance will be considered during the competitive full proposal review.
  - b. New entities: A portion of the implementation grant funding will be available for new entities (including tribal governments, conservation districts, watershed councils, and other local agencies or non-profits) that are interested in becoming a qualified local



NFWF



Columbia Basin  
Water Transitions  
Program

- entity. Entities should have experience in water transaction development and will be expected to develop water transaction(s) within the one-year grant period.
- c. **Accord geographies:** Under the Columbia Basin Fish Accord agreements, a portion of the implementation grant funding is available for entities working within the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation priority geographies. Applicants must discuss projects with tribal staff before submitting a proposal. If requesting funding under an Accord geography, the applicant must submit a standalone proposal that does not include other CBWTP geographies.
2. **State Agencies:** Approximately \$200,000 will be available for state agencies for the following categories:
- a. **Application processing:** Grants will be awarded to state agencies to support the processing of instream flow applications. The awarded agencies will work with implementation grant recipients to review and approve applications.
  - b. **Fish and Wildlife monitoring:** Grants will be awarded to fish and wildlife agencies that assist implementation grant recipients in monitoring flow transactions. Coordination with implementing entities should occur prior to proposal submission.

#### **Additional Funding Information:**

- This grant cycle is one year, with a period of performance of October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021.
- Match is not required but encouraged and may include both programmatic and expected transactional contributions anticipated during the grant period. Matching contributions will be considered as part of the evaluation criteria. Funding or in-kind contributions from another NFWF award or other BPA funding is not allowable match.
- Once an entity is considered qualified and receives a grant through this solicitation, they are then eligible to submit water transaction projects through CBWTP's closed water transaction solicitations. There is a separate review and evaluation process for those proposals.
- Applicants should budget for staff participation in CBWTP's bi-annual meetings. Meetings are held within the CBWTP geographic area and typically consist of two to three days of presentations, which discuss successes achieved, lessons learned, innovative concepts and future opportunities. The meetings also provide an opportunity to build capacity through information sharing and networking. Budget should include lodging and travel expenses for each staff person attending. NFWF typically invites up to two participants per organization.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

### **Eligible and Ineligible Entities**

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, tribal governments, educational institutions, conservation districts, watershed councils, and other local agencies.



NFWF



Columbia Basin  
Water Transactions  
Program

- 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.

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

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

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to CBWTP’s overall species and habitat conservation goals and clearly addresses program priorities. Proposals will be evaluated on the sub-basin level and applicants should demonstrate the ability of each proposed sub-basin to meet program goals and priorities.

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.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time, with a substantial emphasis on long-term water transactions. This includes future transaction projections, and how future funding will be secured to implement long-term deals, monitoring and maintenance activities.

Monitoring – Project will incorporate water transaction monitoring plans in accordance with the Flow Restoration Accounting Framework regarding project compliance and implementation monitoring requirements. Project demonstrates how collaboration with partnering entities will leverage habitat and biological data.

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.



NFWF



Columbia Basin  
Water Transactions  
Program

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

**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 reimbursable only. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF.

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). 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.

**TIMELINE**

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information ([www.nfwf.org/cbwtp](http://www.nfwf.org/cbwtp)).

|  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Pre-Proposal Applicant Webinar [ <a href="#">Register here</a> ] | February 10, 2020 at 10 AM PST |
| Pre-Proposal Due Date  | March 4, 2020 by 8:59 PM PST   |
| Invitations for Full Proposals Sent                              | Late March/Early April, 2020   |
| Full Proposal Due Date   | May 5, 2020 by 8:59 PM PST     |



Review Period  
Awards Announced

May to June, 2020  
Early September 2020

## HOW TO APPLY

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

1. Go to [easygrants.nfwf.org](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 *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.

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

Kate Morgan  
Coordinator, Water Investments  
[Katherine.Morgan@nfwf.org](mailto:Katherine.Morgan@nfwf.org)  
(202) 595-2469

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.