



NFWF



Pacific Southwest Fuels Management Strategic Investments Partnership

2020 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar ([Register Here](#)): **Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 11:00 AM Pacific Time**
Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, July 16, 2020 by 8:59 PM Pacific Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to plan and implement fuels management projects on National Forest System (NFS) lands within California. In our fifth year of partnership, the goal of the Pacific Southwest Fuels Management Strategic Investments Partnership (Fuels Partnership) is to identify and fund fuels management projects that reduce the risk of severe wildfire, protect ecological values of USFS restoration investments, and reduce the risk of damage to public and private improvements near USFS lands. A total of \$817,000 is available for year five of this program. These funds are derived from USFS appropriations for fuels management.

A century of widespread fire exclusion and changes in forest management have resulted in a buildup of surface fuels and the overstocking of California forests with trees and ladder fuels. The resulting forest health problems are widespread and increasing, affecting wildlife habitat, water quality and quantity and long-term soil productivity. The buildup of flammable vegetation due to drought conditions, insect and disease-related tree mortality, and historical forest management practices have made managing fire riskier, more complex, and more costly. With climate and vegetation conditions contributing to longer annual fire seasons, agency capacity and resources for fire suppression to protect communities, natural resources and infrastructure are stretched thin.



Environmental changes coupled with past forest management practices have contributed to more frequent and severe fires.

Properly designed and implemented fuels management treatments can decrease the intensity of future wildland fires and restore a healthier natural fire regime to support biodiverse forest ecosystems. The unique ecological process of wildfire recycles nutrients back into the soil and creates a post-fire mosaic of diverse forest age-classes and habitats that are important for species such as Clark's nutcracker, California spotted owl, northern goshawk, and Pacific fisher. Many plants in fire-adapted forests, including the knobcone pine, Bishop pine, and Sargent cypress, have seed cones that require the heat of a fire to open; the seeds of others, including the Giant Sequoia, germinate best on burned or bare mineral soil. Fuel management work in upper watersheds is also

used to maintain and protect important meadow and riparian habitats, which are vital to maintain stream flows and water quality.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The USFS has identified priority project areas throughout California. Details on the fuel management project needs for each respective Forest are included in the appendix section of this RFP. Note that the projects identified in the appendix primarily include ready-to-implement project opportunities for which all planning and compliance have been completed. In addition, we encourage proposals for fuels management projects which help reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire and its impact on natural resources on or adjacent to USFS lands that are not necessarily listed in the appendix.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must address how they will implement or support planning for fuels management projects that contribute to one or more of the following priorities:

- Reduce the risk of severe wildfire
- Protect the natural resource values and ecosystem function of the Forest and its habitats.
- Reduce the risk of degradation to public and private natural resource or infrastructure improvement investments on or near USFS lands
- Protect and enhance habitat important for the survival of the Pacific fisher, Northern spotted owl, and California spotted owl

An applicant may apply for funding to perform work on more than one projects, but should submit a separate funding application for each project.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge outcomes on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project reporting across the program, the Fuels Partnership 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 you proposed activity is not appropriately represented by the metrics below, please contact Jim Bond (Jim.Bond@nfwf.org) to discuss.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Application of fuels management treatment prescription (mechanical/hand)	Habitat Management: Improved management practices - # of acres	Enter the number of acres treated with limbing / thinning / removal of vegetation. Treatment of areas that are impacted by disease or insect infestation should be captured under "Removal of infected individuals - Acres restored" instead.
Application of fuels management treatment prescription (prescribed burning)	Habitat Management: BMP implementation for prescribed burns - # of acres	Enter the number of acres where prescribed burning is implemented.
Treatment or removal of insect or disease-affected trees	Habitat Restoration: Removal of infected individuals - # of acres restored	Enter the number of insect- or disease-affected acres treated with any treatment type (mechanical / hand / prescribed burning). This metric is intended to capture treatment activity for trees affected by disease or insect

		infestation. Treatment of non-diseased forest areas should be captured under one of the two Habitat Management metrics above.
Treatment to improve/protect habitat important for California Spotted Owl	Habitat Management: Improved management practices - # of acres	Enter the numbers of acres treated for the primary benefit of California Spotted Owl. Indicate the type of treatment(s), why the area was chosen for fuels management and how the treated area will protect California Spotted Owl habitat.
Treatment to improve/protect habitat important for Northern Spotted Owl	Habitat Management: Improved management practices - # of acres	Enter the numbers of acres treated for the primary benefit of Northern Spotted Owl. Indicate the type of treatment(s), why the area was chosen for fuels management and how the treated area will protect Northern Spotted Owl habitat.
Treatment to improve/protect habitat important for Pacific fisher	Habitat Management: Improved management practices - # of acres	Enter the numbers of acres treated for the primary benefit of Pacific fisher. Indicate the type of treatment(s), why the area was chosen for fuels management and how the treated area will protect Pacific fisher habitat.
Completion of tasks associated with planning and compliance	Planning, Research, Monitoring: Research - # of studies reported to management	Enter the number of studies / reports / deliverables completed whose findings are delivered to National Forest management

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, Indian tribes, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include unincorporated individuals, international organizations and businesses.

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 court directed legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Fuels Partnership intends to award \$817,000 to support eligible projects in this funding cycle. The following are key elements of this funding opportunity:

- Typical grant awards will be considered in any amount between \$50,000 and \$500,000.
- NFWF will not provide reimbursement for any project expenditures prior to the grant award period of performance and will not be liable for such expenditures.

- Grants for single projects are typically awarded for projects that can be completed within 12 months from the date of award.
- Grant recipients are required to meet all regulatory compliance and contractual requirements associated with the project, and these considerations should be incorporated into your budget and timelines accordingly.
- Matching value contributions to the project are required. Projects are expected to meet or exceed a 50% match ratio to be competitive. The strongest projects will meet or exceed a 1:1 match ratio. Projects not meeting the match expectations may be considered on a limited case-by-case basis.
- Eligible match can include non-federal cash or in-kind contributions, such as staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, cash or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes.
- Federal funds or activity supported through Federal funds are **ineligible** as match.
- Donated contractor services can be valued at current market rates, but general volunteer labor must follow Federal guidelines, currently valued \$25.43/hour. Matching funds do not need to be fully secured prior to submitting a grant proposal, but should have a demonstrable likelihood of being secured to assure the project can be completed as proposed.
- Projects that demonstrate strong partnerships and that include matching funds from various partners/donors to support project costs are strongly encouraged.

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.

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. Project description is sufficient for reviewers to fully understand and evaluate the technical merits of the project (project plans, designs with specific sites, activities identified).

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 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.

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. Projects are expected to meet or exceed a 50% match ratio to be competitive. 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 and all other Federal, state or local regulatory compliance. Unless otherwise noted, implementation projects identified in the RFP Appendix for this funding opportunity have completed required review under the National Environmental Policy Act. Proposals must demonstrate compliance with the scope, terms and conditions of work as described in the relevant NEPA decision document/s.

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). 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. If a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to conduct one 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 Program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information (www.nfwf.org/pswfuels).

Applicant Webinar	June 17, 2020 at 11:00 AM Pacific Time
Full Proposal Due Date	July 16, 2020 by 8:59 PM Pacific Time
Review Period	August – October 2020
Awards Announced	November 2020

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 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 at www.nfwf.org/pswfuels/.

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:

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415-243-3107

Jessica Perla
Coordinator, Western Conservation Programs
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202-595-2422

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.