



NFWF

# 2021 NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS PROGRAM

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Monday November 2, 2020 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time / 9:59 PM Mountain Time**

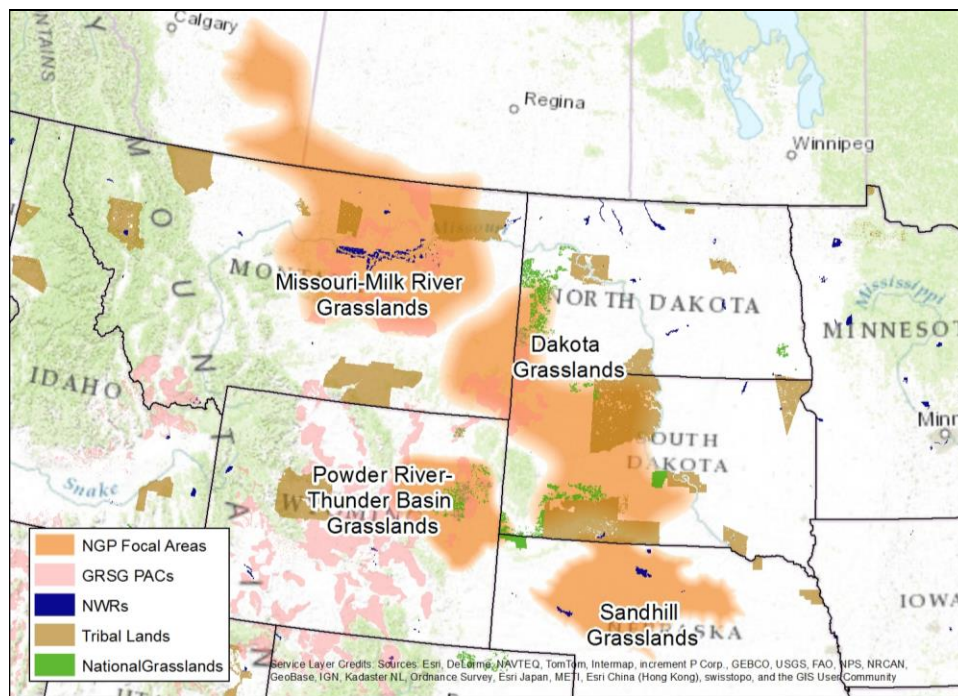
Applicant Webinar: Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> 2020, 10 AM Mountain Time

## OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to conserve and restore grasslands and wildlife species in the Northern Great Plains. The goal of the Northern Great Plains Program is to maintain and/or improve interconnected grasslands in focal areas in order to sustain healthy populations of grassland-obligate species while fostering sustainable livelihoods and preserving cultural identities. Particular species of interest include grassland obligate songbirds, black-footed ferret, pronghorn and greater sage-grouse. The Northern Great Plains program anticipates awarding approximately \$3.5 million in grants. Major funding partners include the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Avangrid and the Margret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

## GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The following are the Northern Great Plains focal areas; Dakota Grasslands, Missouri/Milk River Grasslands, Nebraska Sandhills and the Powder River/ Thunder Basin Grasslands.





## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must specifically address how projects will directly and measurably contribute to the accomplishment of one or more of the program priorities as identified in the [Northern Great Plains Program Business Plan](#). Projects that increase organizational capacity, and utilize innovative and community-based approaches are encouraged.

The Northern Great Plains Program seeks projects that address the following desired outcomes:

*Demonstrate successful models for grassland habitat conservation that:*

- Increase grasslands connectivity through permanent conservation efforts that maintain working ranches and restrict sub-division and sod-busting activities (conservation easements, grass banking, etc.).
- Increase grassland connectivity through habitat restoration efforts (e.g. re-seeding, removal of woody invasives, prescribed fire, etc.).
- Improve management at large scales that facilitates persistent long-term behavioral changes that benefit grasslands and focal species (e.g. conversion of expiring Conservation Reserve Program to managed grazing systems, installation of grazing management agreements etc.).
- Implement or provide capacity to engage in conservation delivery for NRCS – Montana “Targeted Implementation Plans” (TIPS)

*Improve population levels and related outcomes for grassland species in targeted focal areas including:*

- Improve landscape permeability for pronghorn by removing and modifying fence and installing structures to minimize mortality at road crossings and bottleneck sites.
- Sustain populations of greater sage-grouse through restoration of meadows and removing or marking fence around key leks in Sage Grouse Focal Areas.
- Projects that help identify and address limiting factors for grassland obligate songbirds specifically; Baird’s sparrow, Sprague’s pipit, chestnut-collared and McCown’s longspur, and lark buntings.
- Promote black-footed ferret conservation through the distribution of sylvatic plague vaccine in targeted prairie dog colonies.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Northern Great Plains program has 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 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.

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Recommended Metric</b>	<b>Additional Guidance</b>
Greater sage-grouse population	# of leks	Report the number of greater sage-grouse leks on your project (if applicable)
Conservation easements - general	Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of acres protected in perpetual/long-term conservation easements (> 30 years) - Please specify length of the easement in the notes
Conservation easements – sage grouse	Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of acres protected under perpetual/long-term conservation easement (>30 years) specifically for greater sage-grouse, specify length of easement in the notes section
Land restoration - general	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres associated with upland restoration activity (re-seeding, conifer removal etc.) specifically for greater sage-grouse, report what the restoration practice in the notes section
Land restoration – sage grouse	Acres restored	Enter the acres associated with any practice that restores grasslands to a functional condition (seeding crop to grass, removing conifer, specify restoration practice in the notes section)
Riparian restoration	Acres restored	Enter acres associated with mesic wet meadow restoration practices (Zeedyk structures, beaver mimicry etc. note practice type in notes section) specifically for greater sage-grouse
BMP implementation for fencing improvements – sage grouse	Miles of fencing improved	Enter miles of fence removed or improved for greater sage-grouse to minimize collision (fence markers, fladry etc, report practice in the notes section)
BMP implementation for fencing improvements - pronghorn	Miles of fencing improved	Enter miles of fence removal or modification completed for improved pronghorn passage (raising the bottom wire, drop fence, etc report specific practice in the notes section)
Improved management practices	Acres under improved management	Any practice that improves grassland function (grazing management, changed behaviors, infrastructure development to facilitate managed grazing)
Black-footed ferret disease control	# acres protected from disease	Enter the number of acres treated for the control of sylvatic plague and the conservation of Black-footed ferret. (specify control measures implemented in the notes section)



Black-footed ferret disease control	# sites protected	Enter the number of sites protected from disease for the conservation of Black-footed ferrets
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## 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 businesses and unincorporated individuals.

### 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 Great Plains program will award approximately \$3.5 million in grants this cycle to 10-15 grants. Grants may be up to three years in length with the minimum award of \$100,000. A minimum match requirement of 1:1 is required and will be considered in application review.

## 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 [Northern Great Plains Business Plan](#), 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.

**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.





**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 [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 [Northern Great Plains Program](#) page for the most current dates and information.

Applicant Webinar ( <a href="#">Register Here</a> )	Tuesday, September 15 <sup>th</sup> 10:00 AM Mountain Time
Full Proposal Due Date	Monday, November 2 <sup>nd</sup> by 9:59 PM Mountain Time
Review Period	December 2020 – March 2021
Awards Announced	Late March 2021

## 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.
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 at [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:  
Seth Gallagher, Rocky Mountain Regional Program Manager, ([seth.gallagher@nfwf.org](mailto:seth.gallagher@nfwf.org))  
Daley Burns, Regional Program Coordinator, ([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.