

RESTORE COLORADO



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, October 29th by 9:59 PM Mountain Time**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals for the annual 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 and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

In 2021, 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 rangelands
- 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. The concept of conservation at-scale refers to cross-jurisdictional projects that accomplish landscape-level benefits to habitat and wildlife. The RESTORE Colorado Program is especially interested in funding large-scale, cross-jurisdictional projects that consider ecological function over landownership and management. For example, a stream restoration project could incorporate upland forest restoration in order to accomplish watershed-level conservation or a

project addressing big game migrations could cut across sagebrush, grassland and forest habitats to emphasize species benefits and ecological connectivity. Projects that address a single priority habitat will still be considered and may be competitive but are encouraged to emphasize cross-jurisdictional components.

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. Preference will be given to at-scale projects that impact more than one priority habitat type and emphasize ecological connectivity and resilience.

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.
- Projects which are part of a Basin Implementation Plan are strongly encouraged.
- Priority will be given to wetland projects that align with the [Colorado Parks & Wildlife Wetland Wildlife Conservation Program Strategic Plan](#).

Eastern Colorado grasslands

- Enhancement and restoration of large intact tracts of eastern Colorado grasslands focusing on the habitat needs of grassland birds and other 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, sage sparrow and sage thrasher. 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

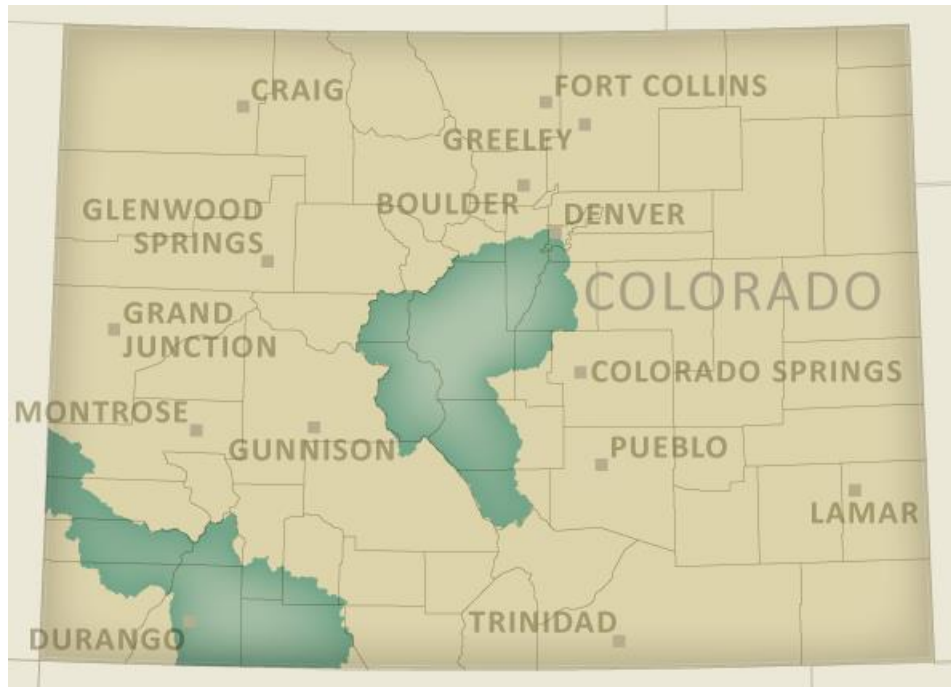
- Increasing forage quality and quantity (including management of invasive annual grasses and encroachment of woody species).

Big game winter range and migration corridors

- Improvement of winter range and/or priority migration corridors for elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep and moose. Projects that align with the [Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Big Game Action Plan](#) and fall within the boundaries of the [Colorado Habitat Partnership Program](#) will be most competitive but projects outside this scope will still be considered if there are significant wildlife benefits. 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).
- Due to the nature of big game migration, proposals are expected to include ecological connectivity (between summer ranges, transitional ranges and winter ranges) and cross-jurisdictional overlap with other priority habitat types.

Forest Habitats

- Forestry projects that have a direct nexus to watershed health and wildlife habitat improvement. For this grant round, funding priority will be given to projects with the highest species and ecological benefits. Projects that align with the priorities and strategies outlined in the [Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative \(RMRI\)](#) will be most competitive. Within the RMRI, this round of funding has prioritized three focal watersheds: (1) the Upper Arkansas; (2) the Upper South Platte; or (3) select watersheds in Southwest Colorado (see map below). Project activities may include but are not limited to:
 - Revegetation with native plants in severe fire-affected watersheds.
 - Habitat restoration practices specific to priority dry conifer forest types and aspen forest type. Dry conifer forest are defined as Piñon-Juniper, Ponderosa Pine and Dry mix-conifer.
 - Restoration of both age class structure and to improve forest stand structure diversity habitat and restore that will help return to natural fire regimes.
 - Forestry projects should emphasize ecosystem resilience and direct species benefits for a species or suite of species of interest, including evaluation of the effectiveness of practices for species conservation.
 - Projects that focus on lodgepole pine or spruce/fir forest types will be given lesser priority.



Forest habitat priority watersheds. Please note that projects working on other program priorities are not limited to these watersheds.

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 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 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	Miles restored	Enter instream miles restored.

habitat		
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.
Wetland restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored
<i>Sagebrush/Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors</i>		
Mesic areas and wet meadows 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	Acres of mesic habitat with restored hydrology (private)	Enter the number of acres restored and restoration technique completed on private lands
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Acres of mesic habitat with restored hydrology (public)	Enter the number of acres restored and restoration technique completed on public lands
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	# 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, LEVERAGE AND MATCH

The RESTORE Colorado program expects to award approximately \$3.5 million in 2021 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, leverage and match is encouraged but not required. Leverage and match will be evaluated for its demonstration of community support and project partnerships, not for the dollar amount contributed, and can include cash, in-kind or volunteer contributions. Leverage should be reported in the proposal narrative in Easygrants. Matching contributions should be included in the “Matching Contributions” section of

the proposal task in Easygrants. Please reach out to the program managers, Seth Gallagher (seth.gallagher@nfwf.org) or Kirstin Neff (kirstin.neff@nfwf.org), and the [Applicant Tip Sheet](#) for additional guidance on how to report leverage and match in the proposal.

Leverage:

- Leverage does not need to follow the rules outlined below for matching contributions. Leverage is intended to demonstrate community support and project partnerships rather than commit a specific amount of funding to the project.
- Leverage does not need to be quantified with a dollar value if that is not applicable to the partnerships you wish to convey.

Match:

Non-federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee’s records
- Not included as contributions for any other Federal award
- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Committed directly to the project and used within the period of performance
- Allowable under OMB 2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

Federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee’s records
- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Committed directly to the project and used within the period of performance

GRANT TIMELINES

A grant term shall not exceed three years in length. Funding priority will be given to projects that will demonstrate significant accomplishments within the first year.

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 landscapes and 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. In general, projects should be part of a larger, comprehensive plans (e.g., NFWF business plans, State Wildlife Action Plans, watershed restoration plans) and result from a prioritization process. Please provide this context within the proposal.

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.

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 and Leverage – Matching Contributions and Leverage (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.

Applicant Webinar	Tuesday August 18 th 2020 10:00 AM Mountain Time
Full Proposal Due Date	Thursday, October 29 th 2020 9:59 PM Mountain Time
Review Period	November – February 2021
Awards Announced	March 2021

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

Sagebrush, Grassland 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.