



ALASKA FISH AND WILDLIFE FUND

2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar: **Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 12:30 PM Alaska Time**
Full Proposal Due Date: **Wednesday, October 21, 2020 by 7:59 PM Alaska Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to further conservation of species and habitats in Alaska. The Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund (AFWF) invests in projects that achieve or substantially lead to measurable on-the-ground conservation outcomes, and fill key information gaps through assessments and strategic monitoring that result in improved management actions. Since 2008, the AFWF has awarded over \$11.5 million to 144 projects. These projects have leveraged over \$26 million in matching funds and in-kind contributions for a total conservation impact of \$37.5 million. In 2021, the AFWF expects to award approximately \$500,000 in grants.

Support for the AFWF is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and various other sources. Grants may be awarded using one or more of these sources of funding.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Grants will be awarded to projects that occur within the geographies highlighted in Map 1, and as listed below:

- Alaska North Slope
- Cook Inlet/Matanuska-Susitna Basin
- Chugach National Forest

Projects outside of these geographies within the State of Alaska that support habitat restoration activities that have a direct benefit to Pacific salmon and/or projects that fill data gaps that will directly benefit Pacific salmon management, will be considered on a case by case basis. See Pacific salmon program priorities below.



Map 1. Geographic focus for the AFWF

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must specifically address how projects will directly and measurably contribute to at least one of the following priorities.

Alaska North Slope

The primary efforts of the AFWF in the Alaska North Slope are filling key knowledge gaps and mitigating direct threats to species populations. In 2021, the AFWF seeks projects in the following priority areas in the Alaska North Slope:

- Fill key information gaps for fish and wildlife populations that will result in improved monitoring and management of species impacted by development and changing climate conditions.
- Implementation of monitoring to assess migratory bird populations, abundance, and trends.
- Implementation of PRISM (Program for Regional and International Shorebird Monitoring) surveys to provide comprehensive, reliable, and timely information on the status and trends of shorebird populations along the Alaska North Slope.
- Projects that incorporate outreach to Native Alaskan communities to foster traditional ecological knowledge sharing and conservation stewardship that will lead to proactive management actions and measurable conservation benefits are of particular interest.

Cook Inlet and Matanuska-Susitna Basin

The AFWF strives to support comprehensive watershed management approaches to conserving fish and wildlife in the Cook Inlet and Matanuska-Susitna Basin regions. In 2021, the AFWF seeks projects in the following priority areas:

- Restore, enhance, and conserve Pacific salmon habitat that complements or advances the goals of relevant Alaska-based Fish Habitat Partnerships in the Cook Inlet and Matanuska-Susitna Basin regions.
- Facilitate acquisition of improved hydrologic and other biological information essential to identify, monitor, and conserve key Pacific salmon resources, including projects that result in updates to the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD), National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), and increase miles in the Anadromous Waters Catalog (AWC).
- Assess threats to shorebird breeding, staging and non-breeding habitat, as well as projects that lead to the conservation and protection of these habitats.
- Projects that incorporate outreach to Native Alaskan communities to foster traditional ecological knowledge sharing and conservation stewardship that will lead to proactive management actions and measurable conservation benefits are of particular interest.

Chugach National Forest

NFWF and its partners will be implementing restoration projects that will improve aquatic organism passage for the benefit of Pacific salmon, while engaging Alaskan Natives on National Forest lands. In 2021, NFWF seeks projects in the following priority areas within the Chugach National Forest:

- Assist USFS personnel with the collection of baseline data for the maintenance, replacement, and/or enhancement of roads, bridges, culverts, and drainage features for the improvement of hydrologic connectivity and aquatic organism passage. Projects that utilize Native Alaskan interns are a priority.
- Projects involving improved access to recreational fishing and wildlife viewing/interpretation that broaden Alaskan Native engagement on National Forest lands will also be considered.

Pacific Salmon

The AFWF supports Pacific salmon projects in collaboration with Alaska Fish Habitat Partnerships, and/or other watershed-based partnerships with USFWS and USFS throughout the entire State of Alaska. Projects that fill information gaps to inform conservation actions and improve Pacific salmon subsistence management, as well as projects that protect, enhance and restore essential fish habitat to ensure long-term viability of the stock complex are of high priority. In 2021, the AFWF seeks project in the following priority areas:

- Maintain and improve connectivity and access to existing habitat including the removal of barriers (e.g. culverts).
- Habitat restoration planning, design, outreach or implementation activities.
- Facilitate detection of population level changes in stock characteristics (i.e. age/sex/length/genetic composition).

- Strengthen monitoring and enhance escapement models and practices for the management and conservation of Pacific salmon. A topic of interest in 2021 includes studies to better understand the quality of escapement.
- Increase understanding of the composition of returning runs to improve effectiveness of management decisions in-season, to develop run re-constructions, and develop outlooks for returns in future years.
- Enhance hydrologic information essential to identify, monitor and conserve key Pacific salmon resources. Topics of interest in 2021 include filling information gaps on thermal landscape of freshwater Pacific salmon habitat and studies that investigate water temperature impact on Pacific salmon productivity.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the AFWF 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 from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Jana Doi (jana.doi@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Fish passage improvements	# passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of fish passage barriers rectified.
Fish passage improvements	Miles of stream opened	Enter the miles of stream opened for fish passage, including access to spawning habitat.
Research	# studies reported to management	Enter the number of studies completed whose findings are reported to management. Identify in the notes the type of plan or study that was completed and which management entity it was reported to.
Tool development for decision-making	# tools developed	Enter the number of tools developed.
Monitoring	# monitoring programs	Enter the number of monitoring programs established or underway.
Monitoring	# sites being monitored	Enter the # sites being monitored.

Building institutional capacity	# full time employees with sufficient training	Enter the number of staff or full-time equivalents with sufficient training and skills engaged in conservation activities.
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance	# internships or fellowships	Enter the number of people employed as interns or fellows. This metric is not intended to capture new full-time employees. If any positions filled are for full time employees, please use the “# of jobs sustained” metric instead.
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance	# people reached	Enter the number of people reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities.
Economic benefits	# jobs created	Enter the number of jobs created.
Economic benefits	# jobs sustained	Enter the number of jobs sustained. The starting value for this metric should be zero. If any positions filled are for interns or fellows, please use the “# of internships/fellowships” metric instead.

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, Alaska Native tribal organizations, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- Equipment: Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- 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.

- NFWF funds may not be used to cover permanent federal employee salary expenses.
- NFWF funds may not be used to supplement shortfalls in government agency budgets.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

Approximately \$500,000 in grant funds will be awarded in 2021. Grant awards generally range in size from \$50,000 to \$200,000, although grants greater than \$200,000 will be considered on a case by case basis. Projects may extend from one to two years.

Projects must have a minimum match of 1:1 non-federal cash or in-kind contributions. While federal contributions cannot be used as match, all potential sources contributions, including federal, should be listed in the application for consideration during the review process.

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 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.

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. 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 (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. 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 program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information ([Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund](#)).

Applicant Webinar	Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 12:30 PM Alaska Time
Full Proposal Due Date	Wednesday, October 21, 2020 by 7:59 PM Alaska Time
Review Period	October 2020 – March 2021
Awards Announced	March 2021

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 [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:

Jana Doi
Manager, Alaska and Hawaii Programs
jana.doi@nfwf.org
(415) 243-3102

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.