



NFWF

PECOS WATERSHED CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar [[Register Here](#)]: **September 22nd 2020**

at 12:00pm-1:00pm Eastern / 11:00am-12:00pm Central / 10:00-11:00am Mountain

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, October 29th 2020**

by 11:59pm Eastern / 10:59pm Central / 9:59pm Mountain

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is announcing the fourth annual funding opportunity as part of the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative. NFWF will award grants to restore and sustain healthy rivers, streams and grassland systems that provide important wildlife habitat in the Pecos watershed and adjacent areas of New Mexico and Texas. Up to \$1 million will be available. Major funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Bureau of Land Management in New Mexico and eight corporate partners: Apache Corporation, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Marathon Oil, Occidental Petroleum, Shell Oil Company and XTO Energy.

In this Request for Proposals under the Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative, NFWF is seeking to support conservation projects that align with the priorities described below.

Grants will be awarded in three categories: Habitat Restoration and Species Intervention. Program priorities include implementing habitat restoration strategies and increasing baseline species information for species of interest within specific aquatic and grassland focal areas.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The Initiative will award grants in southeastern New Mexico and west Texas within the focal areas. The aquatic focal geographies map (Figure 1) identifies several aquatic focal areas along tributaries of the Pecos River and the river main stem which will be given priority. The Pecos grasslands focal geographies map (Figure 2) identifies the region in which projects targeting pronghorn and migratory grassland birds will be given priority.

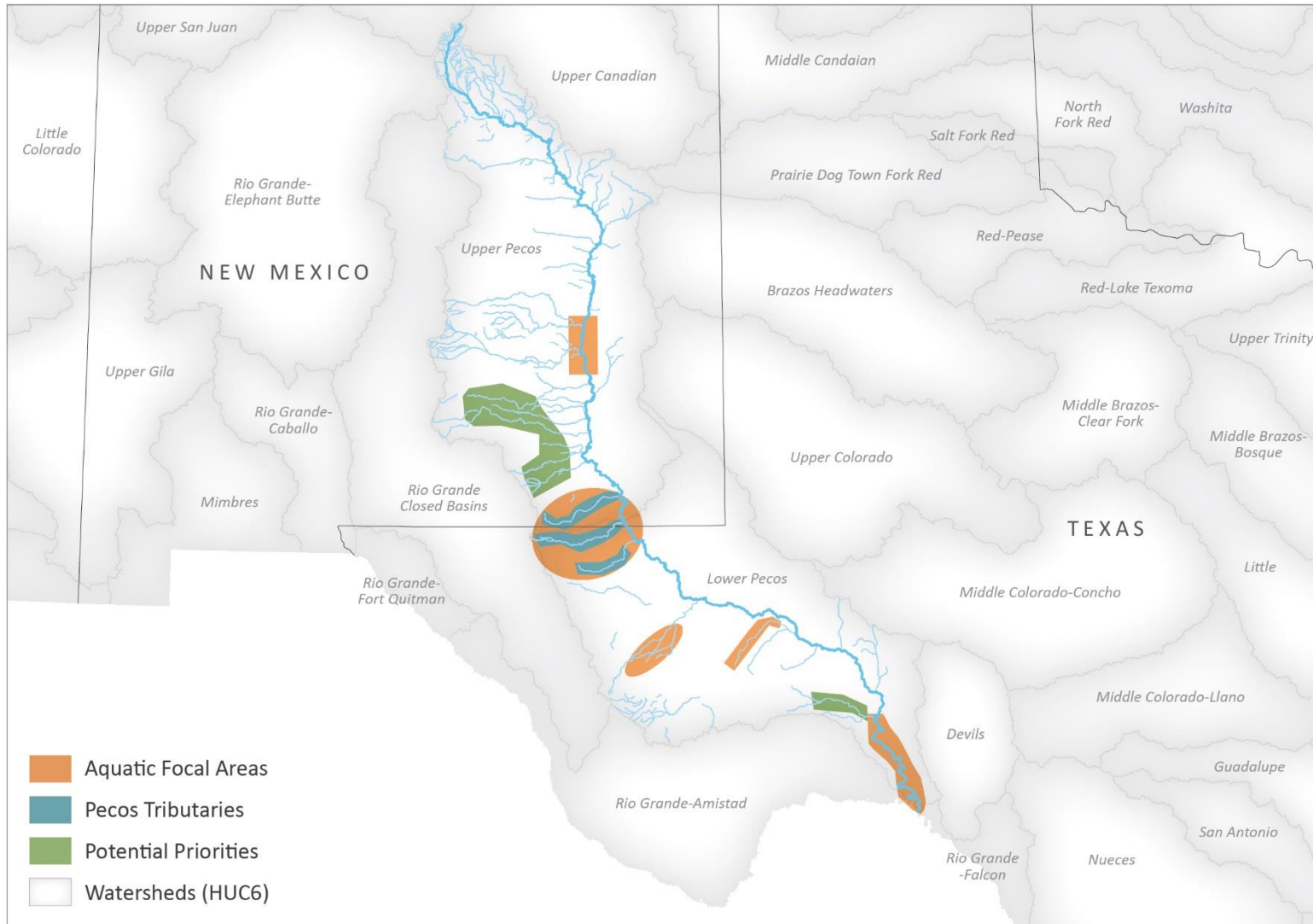


Figure 1. Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative Aquatic Focal Geographies

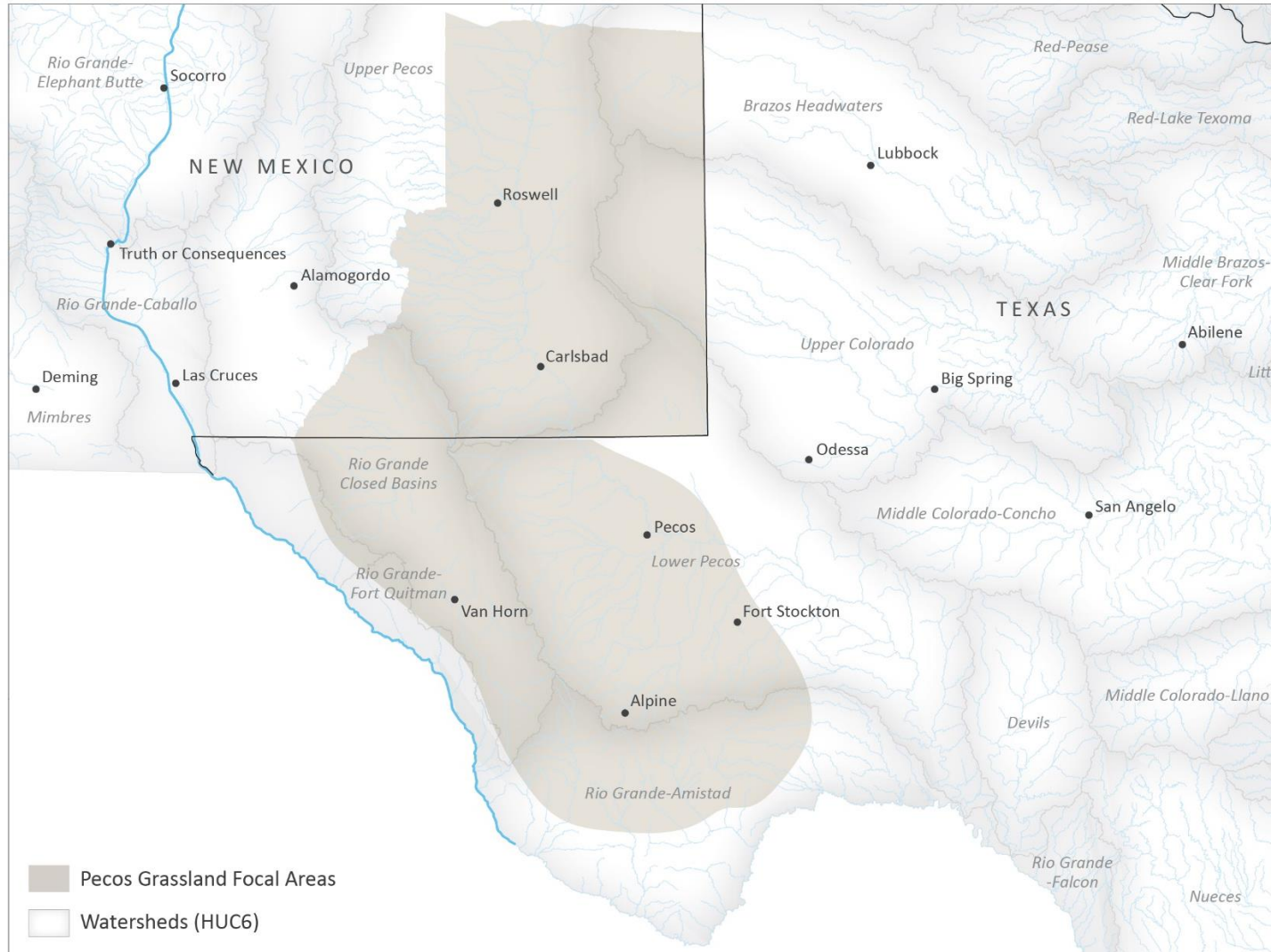


Figure 2. Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative Grasslands Focal Geographies



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 [Southwest Rivers Program Business Plan](#).

Habitat Restoration and Management Grants

Grants will be awarded for projects that improve habitat for one or more of our target species:

- **Stream and Riparian Habitat:** Create and enhance riparian habitat in focal geographies to benefit target aquatic species listed below. This work may include flexible management prescriptions for upland grazing and restoration of native vegetation. Projects that restore the integrity and complexity of riparian areas to provide important edge habitat and wildlife corridors, protect the quality of freshwater systems, and demonstrate the benefits of aquatic connectivity projects to human communities through improved infrastructure, such as improved stream-road crossings, are encouraged. Projects addressing water availability for riparian habitat will also be considered. Projects should include long-term maintenance strategies for restored areas including invasive species, water availability and grazing management.
- **Grassland Habitat Restoration and Management:** Implement outcome based grassland restoration and grazing management projects that use a range of practices and prescriptions to create, sustain or improve large blocks of high quality Chihuahuan desert grasslands for the focal species listed below. Projects should address habitat quality, connectivity and management for grasslands that provide actual or potential habitat for pronghorn (including fence modification) and migratory grassland bird species. Projects that engage landowners with a range of property sizes and interests are strongly encouraged.
- **Outreach and Technical Assistance:** Improve the management of public and/or private lands that contain habitat or potential habitat for focal species. Projects may execute innovative outreach and marketing strategies to engage target audiences, especially private agricultural landowners and land managers, in adopting practices that enhance habitat conditions. Projects should attempt to leverage NRCS funding and cost-share programs when possible. Technical assistance to facilitate design of habitat restoration and infrastructure projects are also supported.

Species Intervention Grants

Grants will be awarded for projects that secure or establish populations of certain target aquatic species, including Pecos gambusia, Pecos pupfish and Texas hornshell:

- **Securing existing populations:** Implement strategies that protect target species from invasion and/or disease.



- **Establishing new populations:** For target species with limited range that are threatened by invasion, translocate individuals to suitable habitats that will increase redundancy and establish protected populations.

Focal Species

Aquatic/Riparian Species

Pecos pupfish
 Pecos gambusia
 Rio Grande (Western) Cooter
 Southwestern willow flycatcher
 Texas hornshell

Grassland Species

Chestnut-collared longspur
 Sprague’s Pipit
 Pronghorn

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the *Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative* has a list of metrics in Easygrants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project, and that each conservation action be measured by the 1-3 most relevant metrics. The number of proposed metrics will not have any bearing on the competitiveness of the proposal.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
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
Texas Hornshell - Instream restoration	Miles restored	Enter instream miles restored for the benefit of Texas hornshell.
Land restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres that have been restored. Do not include any riparian acres you recorded under the Riparian Restoration metric.
Removal of invasives	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres of invasives that have been removed
Restoring hydrology	# sites with restored hydrology	Enter the number of sites with a reduced risk of point-source water quality impairment.



Riparian restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored
Pronghorn - BMP implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of fencing improved	Enter the miles of fencing improved with pronghorn-friendly fencing.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Acres with BMPs	Enter the number of acres upstream of the Pecos River and its tributaries on which BMPs for improved water quality are implemented.
Improved management practices	Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres on which improved resource management is the main outcome.
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance	# people reached	Enter the number of people reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance	# people with changed behavior	Enter the number of individuals demonstrating a minimum level of behavior change
Volunteer participation	# volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers participating in projects
Pecos Pupfish - Invasive animal or predator removal/ Fencing nests from predators	# barriers created	Enter the # of barriers created to protect populations of Pecos pupfish by preventing passage of non-native species
Pecos Gambusia - Translocation	# translocations and/or social attraction projects	Enter the number of translocations and/or social attraction projects initiated for Pecos gambusia.
Pecos Pupfish - Translocation	# translocations and/or social attraction projects	Enter the number of translocations and/or social attraction projects initiated for Pecos pupfish.
Monitoring	# sites being monitored	Enter the # sites being monitored
SW Rivers - Research - # studies reported to mgmt	# studies reported to mgmt	Enter the number of studies completed whose findings are reported to management



ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants include: non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal Governments and Organizations, and educational institutions.

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.
- Funds from this program cannot support fee title land acquisition projects. However, funds may cover certain transaction costs associated with an acquisition (appraisals, title searches, surveys) and for conservation easements.
- 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 Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative will award up to \$1 million in the 2021 funding cycle. NFWF expects to make 6-10 grant awards from this Request for Proposals. Projects should begin within six months of the award date and be completed within three years of the agreed start date. These grants require matching contributions (either cash or in-kind) valued at 50% of the total project costs (1:1 ratio). Matching funds may be federal or non-federal in origin, with that distinction made in the Matching Funds section of the application. If achieving the match requirement is an impediment, contact NFWF staff representatives to discuss.

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.



Initiative Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to the Initiative’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the initiative 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.

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.

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.

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 [Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative](#) program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

Applicant Webinar [Register Here]	Sep. 22 nd at 11:00am CT/10:00am MT
Full Proposal Due Date	Oct. 29 th by 11:59pm ET/10:59pm CT/9:59pm MT
Review and Notification Period	November 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.
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 (www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/home.aspx).

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

Kirstin Neff
Manager, Southwest Rivers Program
Kirstin.Neff@nfwf.org
(303) 222-6485

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.