



Southeast Aquatics Fund

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PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Southern Company

ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 5,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$6.1 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org

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Top to bottom: greenbreast darter, tricolor shiner, coosa darter

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Southern Company announced a fourth year of funding for Southeast Aquatics Fund projects. Eleven new or continuing watershed-based habitat restoration and enhancement projects totaling \$2.1 million were awarded. The eleven awards announced generated over \$2.9 million in match from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of over \$5 million.

The Southeast Aquatics Fund is a competitive grants program that supports watershed-based restoration to improve the health of southeastern aquatic systems and secure populations of native freshwater aquatic species. By focusing on habitat restoration, a diversity of species benefit, from game species to at-risk species, helping to reduce landowner conflicts and ultimately reduce the possibility of future listings under the Endangered Species Act.

(continued)

Private Landowner Outreach and Technical Assistance to Restore Watersheds (TX)

Grantee: Wildlife Habitat Federation

Grant Amount:\$207,003
 Matching Funds:\$207,003
 Total Project:\$414,006

Help land managers develop management plans and enroll in Farm Bill programs to improve working land function, enhance habitat and increase the quantity and quality of water in three Texas watersheds to benefit aquatic species in the Gulf Coast region. Project will increase technical assistance capacity, improving management of 20,000 acres and using Farm Bill financial programs to assist 30 landowners with implementation of their habitat management plans.

Monitoring Status of Bridled Darters and Assessing Threats to Blue Shiners (AL, GA, TN)

Grantee: Tennessee Aquarium

Grant Amount:\$113,097
 Matching Funds:\$116,970
 Total Project:\$230,066

Monitor abundance and genetic health of the bridled darter, and assess threats to federally threatened blue shiners in the Coosa River drainage. Project will utilize snorkeling, eDNA surveys and DNA analysis from tissues to monitor bridled darters, and will utilize geographic information systems, fish passage assessments, eDNA surveys, and habitat comparisons to other watersheds to assess threats to blue shiners.

Improving Passage and Monitoring Populations of Trispot Darters in Big Canoe Creek Watershed (AL)

Grantee: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Alabama ES Field Office (Decatur)

Grant Amount:\$235,367
 Matching Funds:\$235,496
 Total Project:\$470,863

Enhance fish passage accessibility and improve population estimates within known spawning areas for the Trispot Darter in the Big Canoe Creek watershed. Project will remove two large culverts from an identified priority restoration site and replace with a bridge structure to improve the hydrologic regime, monitor fish before and after restoration, conduct an assessment to estimate spawning site populations, and conduct surveys in non-spawning habitats.

Conservation of Ricelands in South and Central Louisiana through Technical Assistance and Outreach

Grantee: Ducks Unlimited

Grant Amount:\$200,000
 Matching Funds:\$220,000
 Total Project:\$420,000

Further technical assistance and outreach within the rice growing regions of Louisiana through NRCS' Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Project will protect and enhance approximately 20,000 acres through technical assistance to producers, as well as strengthen, increase, and encourage the voluntary participation of private landowners in Farm Bill Programs.

Increasing Landowner Engagement to Improve Water Quality and Quantity in the Suwannee Watershed (FL)

Grantee: Alachua Conservation Trust

Grant Amount:\$200,000
 Matching Funds:\$976,133
 Total Project:\$1,176,133

Provide additional technical assistance to landowners within Florida's Suwannee Basin to accelerate the conveyance of Farm Bill programs benefiting water quality and quantity. Project will engage landowners in cost-share programs resulting in permanent acres protected and the implementation of best management practices for the reduced impact on regional water and aquatic species.

Water Quality Conservation for Fish and Mussels in the Conasauga River Watershed (GA, TN)

Grantee: Limestone Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council

Grant Amount:\$256,304
 Matching Funds:\$257,034
 Total Project:\$513,338

Build on previous project efforts to work with local agricultural and business landowners to improve water quality in the Conasauga River watershed. Project will create partnerships and conduct outreach in order to implement water quality best management practices and bolster conservation efforts in support of published recovery plans for 10 of the listed fish and mussel species in the basin.



Morning light on a wetland in Alabama

Engaging Landowners to Improve Habitat for Listed and At-Risk Aquatic Species in South Alabama

Grantee: Alabama Forestry Foundation

Grant Amount:\$350,000
 Matching Funds:\$350,000
 Total Project:\$700,000

Increase outreach and technical assistance to private landowners in a ten-county area of south Alabama to protect and improve aquatic habitat for threatened, endangered and at-risk species. Project will work closely with local NRCS offices and engage 120 landowners to develop a management plan that includes best management practices, implement conservation practices, or sign-up for an NRCS program, resulting in 7,500 acres under improved management and 20 stream miles opened.

Reducing Sediment in Chattahoochee National Forest to Benefit the Blue Shiner and Bridled Darter (GA)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount:\$75,000
 Matching Funds:\$75,000
 Total Project:\$150,000

Reduce sediment loading to Holly Creek by replacing six undersized and perched culverts, and improve drainage and filtration along 1 mile of road. Project will significantly improve water quality for the federally threatened blue shiner, endemic to the Mobile River drainage, as well as the Georgia state endangered bridled darter.

Restoring Radium Springs Through Agriculture (GA)

Grantee: Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife

Grant Amount:\$205,000
 Matching Funds:\$205,000
 Total Project:\$410,000

Provide outreach and assistance to implement innovative irrigation best management practices in the Radium springshed, the largest spring in Georgia. Project will work with local farmers to reduce their water usage and implement best management practices across approximately 1,000 acres to provide flow resiliency in critical spring habitat areas, benefiting a variety of species, including gulf sturgeon, gulf striped bass, Dougherty plain cave crayfish, and the Georgia blind salamander.

Aquatic Habitat Conservation within the Pascagoula and Pearl River Watersheds (MS)

Grantee: Wildlife Mississippi

Grant Amount:\$199,991
 Matching Funds:\$210,000
 Total Project:\$409,991

Conserve aquatic systems by conducting landowner outreach and technical assistance within the Pascagoula and Pearl River watersheds. Project will provide outreach, workshops and presentations, and one-on-one technical assistance to landowners to improve management of 1,000 acres and potentially protect 200 acres, positively impacting the aquatic or wetland-associated protected species in these drainages.



Striped bass

Fish and Mussel Population Monitoring at Holly Creek (GA)

Grantee: Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Grant Amount:\$65,747
 Matching Funds:\$66,062
 Total Project:\$131,809

Monitor mussel, fish, and aquatic invertebrate populations, along with water quality parameters, in the Holly Creek subwatershed of the Conasauga River watershed. Project will provide an understanding of the current status of aquatic species populations, including bridled darter, trispot darter, and villosa mussels, in Holly Creek, and how those populations change over time and in response to management activities.