



NFWWF



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NRCS



## MONARCH BUTTERFLY AND POLLINATORS CONSERVATION FUND

### 2021 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Pre-Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, April 15 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

Full Proposal Due Date: **Wednesday, June 30 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

### OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to advance pollinator conservation. The goal of the Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund (Pollinator Fund) is to protect, conserve, and increase habitat for the monarch butterfly and other native insect pollinators. The most competitive projects will demonstrate clear benefits to both the monarch butterfly and additional at-risk native insect pollinators species. Grants will be awarded in two categories:

1. Technical Assistance for Private Working Lands
2. Habitat Improvement

The Pollinator Fund will award up to \$1.8 million in grants in 2021: up to \$600,000 for Technical Assistance for Private Working Lands and up to \$1.2 million for Habitat Improvement. Funding is provided by Bayer Crop Science, BNSF Railway, Shell Oil Company, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and U.S. Forest Service (USFS).

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Grant funding will be awarded in the following states: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming. West of the Rocky Mountains, priority will be given to projects on or adjacent to the following: working lands, monarch butterfly overwintering sites, and USFS lands.

### PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must specifically address how the proposed project will directly and measurably contribute to the accomplishment of the Fund’s goals as outlined in the [Monarch Butterfly Business Plan](#). As such, all proposals must provide the number of acres restored or enhanced as a result of the project. Proposals must include plans to restore or enhance a minimum of 150 acres. Since 2015, successful proposals have included a median of 600 acres and an average of 2,100 acres restored or enhanced.

If a project is expected to benefit multiple at-risk native insect pollinator species, the applicant should list the relevant species and how they will benefit. Priority will be given to projects that benefit the monarch butterfly and one or more native insect pollinator species that are federally



listed, candidate, or proposed native insect pollinator species or state-listed Species of Greatest Conservation Need insect pollinators.

Each applicant will identify one category that best describes the project. The Pollinator Fund seeks projects in the following two categories:

### **1. Technical Assistance for Private Working Lands**

Funding in this category will support implementation of technical assistance to increase the number of private landowners engaged in monarch butterfly and pollinator conservation practices on working lands. Up to \$600,000 is expected to be available for grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000. Funding will be awarded for projects up to three years in length following finalization of the grant agreement.

Applicants in this category must provide the following: 1) an estimate of the number of conservation plans to be created, the amount of acres to be restored or under improved management, the typical conservation practices to be implemented, and activities to maintain the implemented practices; 2) description of past projects related to working lands conservation, including any projects completed in partnership with NRCS, if applicable; 3) indication of the number of positions (in terms of full time employee (FTE) equivalents) to be supported by the proposed project; and 4) a brief description (no more than 250 characters with spaces) of how the project has been discussed with NRCS plus contact information for the relevant NRCS project partner. Contact information not included in the character count.

Funding will support the following two strategies:

- A. Hiring additional staff or contractors, based on demonstrated need, including staff to assist landowners and NRCS with developing pollinator habitat management plans and implementation of new and existing NRCS financial assistance contracts.
- B. Targeting outreach to landowners and other partners to prioritize, plan, and deliver financial assistance available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other Farm Bill programs to improve pollinator habitat and support at-risk species.

### **2. Habitat Improvement**

Funding in this category will support on-the-ground work to increase the quality, quantity and connectivity of habitat for the monarch butterfly and other native insect pollinators. Up to \$1.2 million is expected to be available for grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$175,000. Funding will be awarded for projects up to two years in length following finalization of the grant agreement.

Applicants in this category should define a step-by-step restoration plan including site preparation, equipment used, planting techniques, size of the project area, description of target native plant community, and maintenance plan (e.g., prescribed burning, mowing, grazing schedules). If preparing a proposal that includes collecting or propagating native plants, applicants should describe the intended use of the seed or seedlings.



Restoration work will focus on the following lands:

- Federal, state and tribal lands
- Rights-of-way
- Agricultural lands, including land enrolled in Farm Bill programs
- West of the Rocky Mountains, on or adjacent to the following: private working lands, monarch butterfly overwintering sites, and USFS lands.

Monarch habitat plantings across the breeding range must include at least one species of regionally appropriate milkweed. Monarch habitat must also include nectar plants with bloom times that coincide with the presence of monarchs in the project site area. To meet the nutritional needs of breeding and migrating adult monarchs, monarch plantings must provide at least three blooming nectar species (in addition to milkweed) during each of the following periods: spring, summer, and fall. Projects proposed to benefit other at-risk native insect pollinators should specify habitat needs for those species and how the proposed work will support their breeding, nectaring, nesting, or other habitat needs.

Funding will primarily support the following two strategies for either the eastern or western monarch butterfly population plus additional at-risk native insect pollinators:

- A. Restore and enhance habitat, with an emphasis on regionally appropriate milkweed and a diversity of nectar plants.
- B. Increase native seed and seedling supply, with an emphasis on improving the sustainability and affordability of regionally appropriate, local ecotypes (see Definitions section).

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Pollinator Fund provides a list of recommended metrics in Easygrants. We ask that applicants select the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below).

- **All proposals must include Acres Restored or Acres Under Improved Management as one of the relevant metrics. Proposals must include plans to restore or enhance a minimum of 150 acres.**
- **The starting value for all metrics should be entered as zero.**

Please contact Crystal Boyd ([crystal.boyd@nfwf.org](mailto:crystal.boyd@nfwf.org)) if you have questions about which metrics best apply to your project.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Restore or Enhance Monarch Butterfly and Pollinator Habitat	• Acres Restored*	See Restore in Definitions section.
	• Acres Under Improved Management*	See Under Improved Management in Definitions section.

Increase Native Milkweed and Native Plant Resources Supply	• Pounds Harvested	Enter the number of pounds of <u>milkweed</u> ( <i>Asclepias</i> spp.) seed collected. Only include pounds of clean seed (see Definitions section). May include fractions.
	• # Seedlings Propagated	Enter the number of <u>milkweed</u> ( <i>Asclepias</i> spp.) plugs propagated. This includes the number of new milkweed plants successfully established to be transplanted for use in current or future monarch habitat restoration/enhancement sites.
Technical Assistance for Private Working Lands	• Acres Restored*	See Restore in Definitions section.
	• Acres Under Improved Management*	See Under Improved Management in Definitions section.
	• # Workshops, Webinars, Meetings	Please enter the number of workshops, webinars, and/or meetings hosted.
	• # People Reached	Enter the number of individuals or partners engaged.
	• # Plans Developed	Enter the number of conservation plans created.
	• # Jobs Created	Enter the number of Full Time Employees (FTEs) hired.
	• # Jobs Sustained	Enter the number of Full Time Employees (FTEs) sustained.

\*For reporting purposes, each project area should only be reported once as either “restored” or “under improved management” based on the condition of the area relative to the monarch butterfly at the beginning of project implementation (see Definitions section).

## DEFINITIONS

- **At-risk Native Insect Pollinator Species:** Federally listed, candidate, or proposed native insect pollinator species and state-listed Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) native insect pollinators
- **Local Ecotype:** A locally adapted population of a species that has a distinctive limit of tolerance to environmental factors.
- **Clean Seed:** Seeds exclusive of inert matter, invasive/weed seeds, and all other seeds.
- **Restore\*:** Habitat restoration involves the manipulation of an area with the goal of returning integrity to a site where native habitat has been lost or degraded. Examples may include, but are not limited to, planting native plant communities that likely existed previously on the site. For example, conservation plans developed with technical assistance would reference appropriate NRCS practice standards designed to establish wildlife habitat.
- **Under Improved Management\*:** Habitat under improved management (i.e. enhanced) involves the manipulation of an area to change (heighten, intensify or improve) specific ecological function(s) or the vegetative successional stage of the project site to provide additional benefits to monarchs and other pollinators. Habitat under improved management (i.e. enhanced) includes implementation or modification of land management practices such as mowing, haying, grazing, prescribed burning, invasive plant species control, forest health management activities, and interseeding existing habitat with milkweeds and forbs. For



example, conservation plans developed with technical assistance would reference appropriate NRCS practice standards designed to enhance wildlife habitat.

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include nonprofit 501(c) organizations, U.S. federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, tribal governments and organizations, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations.

### 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.
- **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.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

Up to \$1.8 million is expected to be available for grant awards in 2021. Over the past six funding cycles, the average application success rate was 16%. In 2020, the application success rate was 27%. Funding availability and project duration relevant to each category are described here:

1. **Technical Assistance for Private Working Lands:** Up to \$600,000 is expected to be available for grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000. Funding will be awarded for projects up to three years in length following finalization of the grant agreement.
2. **Habitat Improvement:** Up to \$1.2 million is expected to be available for grants ranging from \$100,000 to \$175,000. Funding will be awarded for projects up to two years in length following finalization of the grant agreement.

Project start and end dates should define the period during which all proposed work is accomplished, all requested funds are spent, and all matching funds are spent or applied. The



project narrative should include a clear timetable or schedule for project completion. Significant project deliverables and outcomes are expected to be achieved in year one. The start date indicated in an application should not precede November 1, 2021.

Matching funds of at least 1:1 in non-federal (U.S.) funds are required. Matching contributions must be spent or applied between the start and end dates indicated in the application. Matching contributions may include cash, in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. The cost of land acquisition or easement may also qualify as leverage for a project involving work at the protected site. In addition, eligible indirect costs (that would not be paid with requested grant funding) may be applied as match. More information about using indirect costs as match can be found by [clicking here](#). Applicants are encouraged to include federal partner contributions in the proposal, although those contributions will not count toward the minimum match requirement. NFWF will not consider the portion of landowner expenses required as cost share to obtain funding on Farm Bill projects as partner contributions to match.

## 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. Project selections may also be based on other considerations, such as availability of funding, geographic balance, and balance among project types and grant size.

### Conservation Merit and Implementation

- **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.
- **Conservation Plan and Context** – The project advances the [Monarch Butterfly Business Plan](#) and other existing conservation plans or strategies.
- **Complementarity** – Project complements and builds on the work of others rather than duplicating efforts.





- **Timeliness** – Project has commenced planning, design and engineering to the extent that on-the-ground implementation can begin shortly after the grant is awarded.

### **Project Costs**

- **Funding Need** – Proposal establishes a clear need for the funds being requested and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.
- **Matching contributions** – A 1:1 non-federal match is required for all awards. Matching contributions are to be spent/applied between the start and end dates specified in the proposal.
- **Budget** – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally funded projects must comply with OMB Uniform Guidance as applicable ([OMB Uniform Guidance](#)).
- **Efficiency** – Costs are fitting for the activities proposed.

### **Qualifications**

- **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. Proposal identifies proposed partners (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.)
- **Letters of Support** – Proposal includes letters of support from landowners where the proposed work would occur and from other significant partners, especially those providing match or contributing to the project in a significant way.

### **Evaluation and Maintenance**

- **Monitoring** – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success, adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise, and assure conservation efforts are effective and strategic. Preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate plans to document site condition and monarch usage prior to project implementation. For example, please note if [Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program protocols](#) or similar monitoring efforts have been or will be employed at project sites.
- **Long-term Sustainability** – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. Proposal indicates how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

### **OTHER**

**Monitoring** – NFWF may implement independent monitoring efforts in the future to measure the environmental outcomes from projects funded under this solicitation. Award recipients may be



asked to facilitate granting of access to project sites for NFWF or its designees for future environmental monitoring purposes.

**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 Acknowledgment 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 [Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund](#) webpage for the most current dates and information.

<a href="#">Applicant Webinar</a>	March 17, 3:00 PM, Eastern Time
Pre-Proposal Due Date	April 15, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Invitations for Full Proposals Sent	May 28
Full Proposal Due Date	June 30, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Review Period	July to November
Awards Announced	Late November

## **HOW TO APPLY**

All application materials must be submitted online through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Easygrants system.

1. Go to [easygrants.nfwf.org](http://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 NFWF’s website at the [Applicant Information](#) page.

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

**Crystal Boyd**  
Pollinator Programs Manager  
612-564-7253  
[crystal.boyd@nfwf.org](mailto:crystal.boyd@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.