



NFWF



Columbia Basin
Water Transactions
Program

COLUMBIA BASIN WATER TRANSACTIONS PROGRAM FY22 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar [[Register here](#)]: **Tuesday, August 10 at 10:00 AM PST**
Full Proposal Due Date: **Tuesday, August 24 by 8:59 PM PST**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is requesting proposals to enhance, restore, and protect stream flows for key fish habitat in the Columbia Basin. The Columbia Basin Water Transaction Program (CBWTP) funds water transactions development and implementation in the United States portion of the Columbia Basin and is the largest instream flow restoration program in the country. Since its inception in 2002, the CBWTP has implemented over 643 water transactions and secured over 12.4 million acre feet of water in flow-limited tributaries of the Columbia River Basin. The CBWTP works across portions of Oregon, Washington, Montana and Idaho, and its investments in water transactions have increased stream flows for the benefit of native fish species, including Pacific salmon, steelhead trout, and resident fish species.

Approximately \$1.8 million will be available for programmatic support, allowing for staff time, limited travel, supplies/materials, indirect, and other associated costs of developing a water transaction. NFWF will only accept proposals for programmatic support to develop water transactions under this solicitation, not for water acquisitions. If an entity is selected through this RFP, they will be eligible to apply for funding to pay for individual water transactions during the term of the grant through a competitive process. Funding for this program will be primarily provided by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) with additional support from Altria Group. A portion of the funding from BPA is dedicated to the areas of the Columbia River basin that are covered by the [Columbia Basin Fish Accords](#) with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. Proposals in these geographies should be separate from proposals for other geographies.

If an entity is considered qualified and receives a grant through this solicitation, they are eligible to submit water transaction projects through CBWTP's closed water transaction solicitations. As water transactions are reviewed and deemed eligible to implement, additional funding may be made available during the grant period. More information on the water transaction solicitation process can be found [here](#).

GEOGRAPHIC & SPECIES FOCUS

Proposed activities must be located within the Columbia River Basin in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana. Priority will be given to areas listed in the [2020 BiOp](#) that benefit ESA listed species. In collaboration with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council (NPCC) and BPA requirements, NFWF will grant up to 70% of the funding to entities with a focus on anadromous species and 30% of the funding to those projects with a focus on fish species.



Figure 1. Columbia Basin with BiOp priority geographies

Proposed geographies must include tributaries that have identified flow as a priority limiting factor affecting ESA listed species and are expected to benefit species in one or more of the below categories:

1. ESA listed species in [2020 BiOp](#) priority areas.
2. ESA listed anadromous species not specified above ([National Marine Fisheries Service](#) and [2020 BiOp](#)).
3. ESA listed resident [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#) or state species of concern (by one or more of [OR](#), [WA](#), [ID](#), [MT](#)).
4. Other fish or wildlife not listed above where a benefit can be tied to increased flows in a specific location.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

CBWTP priorities are species and sub-basin focused, based on species of concern and flow limitations. Competitive programmatic proposals will address both factors while also demonstrating innovation, incorporating monitoring plans and connecting on a watershed level.

1. **Species of concern**: Proposals must showcase how the applicant will work toward addressing the conservation needs of one or more species of concern through water transaction implementation.
2. **Flow limitations**: The proposals must articulate an organizational competency in securing water for in-stream tributary flows at a location(s) where low flows are a limiting factor to fish survival, productivity, and distribution and for the maximum reach of river legally and physically possible. The scale of the recovered instream flows should be measurable relative to the overall flow and the scale of habitat loss and other issues in the basin. Proposals should document the entity's intention of working in areas where significant seniority can be protected in-stream through state agency process or is contractually protectable instream at a time of year when needed to benefit fish and wildlife.
3. **Prioritization**: Proposals should clearly articulate the prioritization efforts for each subbasin both historic and future. Prioritization efforts should show the hierarchical planning that has gone into the selection of subbasins, streams, and water rights/properties/landowners. The efforts should articulate WHY the subbasin is important compared to other subbasins, WHY a particular stream is important compared to other streams in the subbasin, and WHY those particular transactions are being sought after. Proposals should show this logic path from the subbasin down to the transaction level to emphasize priorities and levels of importance for species.
 - a. **Existing plans**: If prioritization plans have been completed, describe how those are used in transaction development and planning.
 - b. **New plans**: If prioritization plans have not been developed, describe the current status and how you will utilize the budget to develop them.

Prioritization of projects within the CBWTP should be established locally but linked to broader subbasin and recovery plan efforts (NPCC subbasin plan, watershed assessment, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Recovery Plan). When applying for transactions, the applicant should be able to clearly explain why the particular transaction is important in the system compared to others and what impact it will have for the region.

4. **Adaptive management**: Demonstrate how your efforts are moving beyond preliminary practices and proof of concept methods. Transactions should strive towards permanent instream flow and work to build off of previous iterations and efforts. Applicants should use monitoring and strategic planning results to show how expertise and experience about local systems and the most impactful transactions has been developed.
5. **Innovation**: Proposals should demonstrate how the applicant has and plans to implement innovative methods that increase tributary flows or the development of new transaction

strategies for tributary flow enhancement during critical periods for targeted species. The methods for securing water should be cost-effective in terms of local and regional markets and build long-term trust with water rights holders.

6. **Monitoring:** The proposal should document how compliance and implementation monitoring will be carried out and reported via the CBWTP's [Flow Restoration Accounting Framework \(FRAF\)](#) compliance monitoring forms. The proposal should include a description of long-term monitoring of water flow, and how benefit to fish and wildlife and water quality will be documented. All transactions will be required to have Tier 1 and Tier 2 monitoring unless otherwise approved by CBWTP staff.

Based on final award and grant funding decisions, some awardees may also be asked to report additional summary project information through NFWF's web-based Water Calculator tool. NFWF staff will work with those awardees to minimize duplicate data collection and reporting across FRAF and Water Calculator requirements.

7. **Watershed context:** The proposal should describe collaborative efforts with other entities and document how opportunities for cost-sharing, data sharing and collaboration were considered and developed.

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 and organizations, educational institutions, conservation districts, watershed councils, and other local agencies.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 CBWTP will award approximately \$1.8 million for Qualified Local Entity programmatic grants for the period of October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022. Submission of a proposal does not guarantee funding. See the below timeline for more details on when to expect an award.

Additional Funding Information:

- Match is not required but encouraged and may include both programmatic and expected transactional contributions anticipated during the grant period. Matching contributions will be considered as part of the evaluation criteria. Funding or in-kind contributions from another NFWF award or other BPA funding is not allowable match.
- Once an entity is considered qualified and receives a grant through this solicitation, they are then eligible to submit water transaction projects through CBWTP's closed water transaction solicitations. There is a separate review and evaluation process for those proposals.
- Applicants should budget for staff participation in one CBWTP annual meeting. Meeting will be held within the CBWTP geographic area and typically consist of two to three days of presentations, which discuss successes achieved, lessons learned, innovative concepts and future opportunities. The meeting also provides an opportunity to build capacity through information sharing and networking. Budget should include lodging and travel expenses for each staff person attending. NFWF typically invites up to two participants per organization. COVID travel restrictions may negate this.

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.

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. Project will incorporate water transaction monitoring plans in accordance with the Flow Restoration Accounting Framework regarding project compliance and implementation monitoring requirements. Project demonstrates how collaboration with partnering entities will leverage habitat and biological data.

Long-term Sustainability – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This includes future transaction projections, and how future funding will be secured to implement long-term deals, monitoring and maintenance activities.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

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 reimbursable only. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF.

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. 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.

Standards of Conduct – Applicants must follow established conflict of interest and professional ethics policies at all times in order to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, favoritism, or other improper behavior. BPA has established conflict of interest policies for financial assistance awards. Applicants must disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest in accordance with applicable BPA policy.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the [program page](#) of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

Applicant Webinar [Register here]	August 10, 2021 at 10:00 AM PST
Full Proposal Due Date	August 24, 2021 at 8:59 PM PST
Review Period	August – September
Awards Announced	Mid November

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.

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:

Kate Morgan

Manager, Pacific Northwest Watersheds

Katherine.Morgan@nfwf.org

(202) 595-2469

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.