



# Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Migration Corridors and Habitat Connectivity – Spring 2022

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

Applicant Webinar ([Register Here](#)): **Tuesday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021, at 10:00 AM Mountain Time**

### OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals for projects that enhance and improve the quality of state-identified, or tribal-identified, priority big-game habitat, stopover areas, and migration corridors on federal land and/or voluntary efforts on private and tribal land. Projects will promote robust, sustainable populations of big game such as elk, mule deer and pronghorn, have positive effects on a wide diversity of other species and implement strategies that provide for increased habitat connectivity and climate resiliency. Current funding for the effort is \$2 million, major partners include the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (FWS-PFW), US Forest Service, and ConocoPhillips.

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Only projects proposed in the state-identified focal areas within Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming will be eligible for funding.



### PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must outline specifically how projects will directly address state game and fish (wildlife) department priorities as identified in the [state plans](#), or specific priority projects on tribal lands, to conserve or restore habitat and measurably contribute to the sustainability of local and regional big-game populations and accomplishment of program priorities which include:

1. Restoring degraded priority habitat, stopover areas, and migration corridors by activities identified in the state plans, or comparable tribal plans, such as removing encroaching trees from sagebrush ecosystems,



rehabilitating areas damaged by fire, or treating exotic/invasive vegetation to improve the quality and value of these areas to big game and other wildlife.

2. Work cooperatively with diverse partners to achieve permissive fencing measures, including potentially modifying (via smooth wire), removing (if no longer necessary), installing if serving to direct big game movement out of harm’s way, or seasonally adapting (seasonal lay down) fencing if proven to impede movement of big game through priority migration corridors or habitat.

3. Implement measures such as conservation easements and management agreements or other actions to protect bottle necks within corridors and other areas within priority habitat or stopover areas threatened by fragmentation.

4. Utilize other proven actions necessary to improve the habitat quality /or restore priority big-game habitat, stopover areas, or migration corridors across the West.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the following list of metrics will be provided 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 do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Seth Gallagher ([seth.gallagher@nfwf.org](mailto:seth.gallagher@nfwf.org)) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Conservation easements	Acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr)	Specify the number of acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr)
Best Management Practices (BMP) implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of fencing improved	Specify the number of miles of fencing improved
BMP implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of fencing removed	Specify the number of miles of fencing removed
BMP implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of migration corridor reconnected	Specify the number of miles of migration corridor reconnected
BMP implementation for livestock fencing	Miles of fencing installed	Specify the number of miles of fencing installed
BMP implementation for prescribed burns	Acres	Specify the number of acres treated through prescribed fire
Improved management practices	Acres of private land under improved management	Specify the number of acres under improved management on private lands.
Improved management practices	Acres of tribal land under improved management	Specify the number of acres under improved management on tribal lands.
Improved management practices	Acres of public land under improved management	Specify the number of acres under improved management on public lands.
Land restoration	Acres restored on private land	Specify the number of acres restored
Land restoration	Acres restored on tribal land	Specify the number of acres restored



Land restoration	Acres restored on public land	Specify the number of acres restored
Removal of invasives	Acres restored	Specify the number of acres restored
Movement Success	Mule deer passage success rate	Specify pre and estimated post project movement success rates

**ELIGIBILITY**

***\*\*In order to be considered for funding an application must be accompanied by a letter of support/acknowledgement from the director’s office of the respective state or tribal wildlife agency.\*\****

**Eligible Entities**

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, and tribal governments and 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.
- While federal agency partners are eligible applicants, program funds cannot be applied to federal salary.
- 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**

The 2022 Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Migration Corridors and Habitat Connectivity RFP has approximately \$2 million available for the effort. For this round NFWF anticipates awarding six to ten grants. Grants can range from one to three years in length. A minimum 1:1 non-federal match is required as in-kind or cash contributions. Please see the Applicant Tip Sheet for additional guidance.



Please note, the BLM and FS funds need to be spent on migration corridor projects taking place on or in proximity to BLM and FS lands. The FWS-PFW funds will support migration corridor activities on private and tribal lands. Providing project maps that include state identified priority areas, or tribal priority areas, with a general land ownership layer and legend (i.e. BLM, Forest Service, Tribal, state lands, private lands) are strongly encouraged.

## 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 outlined in the Request for Proposal.

**Technical Merit** – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline.

**Funding Need** – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

**Match** – Minimum 1:1 non-federal match is required, projects will be assessed on their ability to meet this minimum criteria as well as their ability to leverage beyond the minimum requirements.

**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.

**Conservation Plan and Context** – The project advances an existing conservation plan, specifically the individual state plan for “Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors,” or comparable tribal plan. Uploading a project map that includes state identified priority areas, or tribal priority areas, with a general land ownership layer and legend (i.e. BLM, Forest Service, Tribal, state lands, private lands) are ***strongly encouraged***.

**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.

**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

Please check the [Western Big Game Program](#) homepage on the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

Webinar ( <a href="#">Register Here</a> )	Thursday, August 12 <sup>th</sup> 2021 at 10:00 am Mountain
Full Proposal Due Date	Thursday, October 21 <sup>st</sup> 2021 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time
Review Period	November 2021
Awards Announced	Early March 2022

## 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](https://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 - Big Game Migrations” 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:  
*Seth Gallagher, Program Director, Grasslands and Mountain West, [seth.gallagher@nfwf.org](mailto:seth.gallagher@nfwf.org)*  
*Daley Burns, Regional Program Senior Coordinator, [daley.burns@nfwf.org](mailto:daley.burns@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.