

## Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund

### 2022 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar [[Register Here](#)]: **Thursday, November 4, 2021, at 3:30 PM Eastern Time**  
 Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, December 16, 2021 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

### OVERVIEW

The Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund (Fund) will award grants to restore, enhance and maintain bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands, implement conservation practices on working agricultural lands to improve soil health and water quality, and promote aquatic connectivity on private and public lands to improve wildlife habitat and water quality. Major funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, International Paper’s Forestland Stewards Partnership, the Walton Family Foundation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Approximately \$1.4 million is anticipated to be available for grants in 2022.

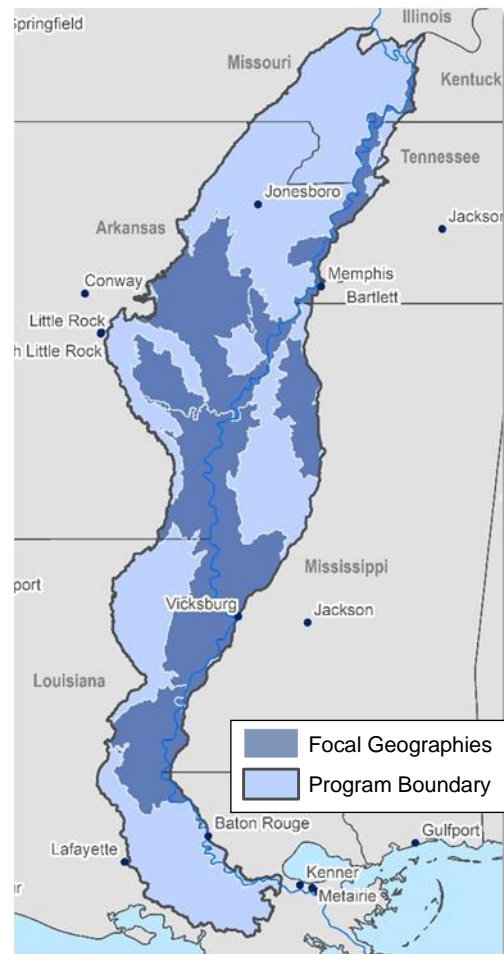
### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The Fund will award grants within the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley (LMAV) region of Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee, with preference given to projects located within focal geographies as depicted in Map 1. A more detailed interactive map can be viewed here: [Interactive Map](#).

### PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Fund is guided by NFWF’s [Business Plan for Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley](#), which identifies six strategic priorities to restore and enhance bottomland hardwood wetlands and aquatic habitats. Goals for two species are currently outlined in the business plan: Louisiana black bear (*Ursus americanus luteolus*) and swamp rabbit (*Sylvilagus aquaticus*). These species were selected as indicators of healthy bottomland hardwood forests and represent the habitat needs of a broader suite of species dependent upon this system. Additional species that are indicators of healthy bottomland hardwood wetlands and improved aquatic connectivity are under consideration for inclusion in the business plan at a later date, including: forest birds, waterfowl and freshwater fish. Projects should seek to benefit at least one of these species or groups.

NFWF is particularly interested in projects that will implement habitat restoration or improvement practices that benefit wildlife while also sequestering carbon and/or improving water quantity or quality. Tree planting projects in particular are encouraged. Applicants should reach out to program staff prior to submitting a proposal to discuss projects that will address carbon and water outcomes.



**Map 1. Geographic Focus**

Priority will be given to projects that effectively implement one or more of the following strategies:

**1. Bottomland Hardwood Forest Enhancement and Maintenance:** Promote and implement the management and enhancement of existing bottomland hardwood forests to improve wildlife habitat<sup>1</sup> and water quality. Projects that address bottomland hardwood enhancement and management on private lands are encouraged to include lands enrolled in the NRCS Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) or Agricultural Conservation Easement Program – Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE), which for the purposes of this RFP will be referred to as WRP/WRE. Strategies may include:

- Mechanical/Herbicide/Thinning: Thinning, pre-commercial thinning, invasive species control, crop tree release and residual stocking to improve forest stand structure, and tree and understory species composition (desired forest conditions) to benefit wildlife. Projects that include treatments on properties enrolled in WRP/WRE should coordinate with the appropriate NRCS state office to ensure compatibility and reference the Tool for Assessment and Treatment of Reforested Bottomland Hardwood Stands on Wetland Reserve Easements. A webmap of existing WRP/WRE easements and estimated year of reforestation can be found here.
- WRP/WRE Forest Inventory, Assessment, and Management Plan Development: Assist landowners with inventorying and assessing forest stands and developing forest management plans, including, but not limited to, properties enrolled in WRP/WRE. Plans on lands enrolled in WRP/WRE should be developed in consultation with the appropriate NRCS state office to ensure compatibility and all plans should address management recommendations that improve forest health and wildlife habitat quality. Preference is for projects that will assist individual landowners advance on-the-ground implementation versus large-scale remote sensing or GIS mapping exercises.
- Implementation Barriers / Innovations: Identify and address specific barriers to bottomland hardwood management and habitat enhancement in a specific geography (i.e., lack of markets, community issues, etc.). Demonstration sites, as well as innovative strategies implemented as pilot projects, with the potential of being scaled up and transferred across the landscape, are encouraged.

**2. Restore, Wetland and Floodplain Hydrology and Implement Conservation Practices on Working Agricultural Lands to Improve Water Quality:** Improve hydrological connectivity and wetland and floodplain habitat functions, and implement conservation practices on working lands. Strategies may include:

- Wetland and Floodplain Restoration: Connecting wetlands and water features between adjacent properties, improving wetland habitat and function through vegetation management, managing for moist soil plants, and installation of low-maintenance water control structures, such as flashboard risers, for water management capability.
- Conservation Practices on Working Agricultural Lands: Rerouting agricultural runoff to constructed or restored wetlands, rehabilitating or stabilizing ditches and/or gullies, integrating cover crops, no-till, conservation crop rotation, and/or establishing buffer strips.

**3. Bottomland Hardwood Forest Restoration (Planting):** Restore bottomland hardwood forests in targeted areas that expand existing bottomland hardwood forests and create corridors between existing

---

<sup>1</sup> Resources to inform and guide bottomland forest management may be found on the Lower MS Valley Joint Venture website: <https://www.lmvjv.org/>

blocks of bottomland hardwood forest to promote wildlife dispersal and expansion. For the purposes of the Fund, “restoration” refers to the establishment of new bottomland hardwood forests, including reforestation of harvested sites and afforestation of cropland. Specific strategies may include:

- **Bottomland Hardwood Plantings:** Implementation of strategies to establish new bottomland hardwood stands on public and private lands include site preparation (e.g., herbicide, mechanical site preparation) and planting of bottomland hardwood seedlings.
- **Natural Regeneration:** Practices that promote natural regeneration of bottomland hardwood forests.

**4. Target Outreach, Education and Assistance to Private Landowners, Forest Practitioners and Other Key Constituencies:** NFWF seeks to invest in strategies to expand engagement with willing landowners and producers, and knowledgeable practitioners, and increase landowner and producer adoption of practices to restore and enhance bottomland hardwood wetland habitat, improve soil health and reduce runoff and sedimentation on agricultural lands, and improve water quality on private lands, including enrollment in Farm Bill programs. The Fund desires to support projects that include outreach and technical assistance to, and enhanced participation of minority and underserved landowners and producers, including [USDA’s historically underserved farmers and ranchers](#). Projects that address landowner barriers to participation in forestry and conservation programs, such as heirs’ property title issues, will be considered.

- **Outreach, Education and Technical Assistance:** Strategies may include:
  - **Capacity:** Hiring new and/or support of existing staff or contractors to plan and implement outreach, education and technical assistance to private landowners/producers. Dedicated funding is available this cycle from NRCS Louisiana and NRCS Mississippi to support foresters, wildlife specialists and other natural resource professionals to deliver technical assistance and assist landowners and producers with enrollment and implementation of new and existing Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) contracts within their respective states. Positions within all states within the LMAV are eligible and applicants are encouraged to contact NFWF staff to discuss needs prior to submitting a proposal.
  - **Landowner/producer outreach and education:** Targeting outreach and education to landowners/producers, including, but not limited to, implementing innovative outreach and marketing methods to expand on-the-ground restoration and protection activities on private lands, such as utilizing data and social marketing techniques to identify and better understand landowner motivations and barriers to adoption of conservation practices. Collaborating with NRCS and other partners to prioritize, plan and deliver NRCS financial assistance, including WRP/WRE, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other Farm Bill programs, including implementation of new and existing NRCS financial assistance contracts.
  - **Increase forest practitioner technical capacity:** Investments to improve forest practitioners’ technical knowledge of management treatments that will achieve desired forest conditions for wildlife through peer-to-peer learning, workshops, and field days.
  - **Public engagement to minimize human-bear conflicts:** Capacity for outreach, education, training, technical assistance and implementation of practices to promote human-bear coexistence and improve perceptions towards Louisiana black bears in the LMAV. Engagement with the public to increase awareness of and support for Louisiana black bear recovery, such as workshops and outreach events that reduce opposition to Louisiana black bear recolonization, will be considered.
- **Advance new market-based solutions or incentives:** Pilot innovative, market-oriented solutions or incentives that stimulate landowner participation in bottomland forest and wetland restoration, enhancement, and protection practices and/or conservation practices on agricultural lands. Examples

of strategies include utilizing ecosystem service payments to support bottomland hardwood and/or wetland restoration and management practices that improve wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration and/or water quality, or coupling new incentive payments funded through the Fund with existing financial assistance programs to extend contract periods and/or implement practices that exceed minimum program requirements. Projects should effectively align with other existing private landowner initiatives or programs, such as [US Fish & Wildlife Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program](#) and [USDA's Working Lands for Wildlife](#), as appropriate.

- **Increase participation in third-party forest certification:** Increase participation in third-party forest certification programs to encourage third-party verification of sustainable forest management practices for bottomland hardwood forests and associated wildlife.

5. **Bottomland Hardwood Forest Habitat Conservation (Easements):** Funding is available for capacity and transaction costs to facilitate conservation easements that protect existing, high quality bottomland hardwood habitat, or key sites targeted for bottomland hardwood restoration and/or enhancement that are part of a broader restoration proposal. Requests should be for transaction/due diligence costs, such as surveys, appraisal, environmental report, etc., and should not exceed 10% of the total proposal request. In limited instances, high leverage projects may be considered for conservation easement acquisition costs. Please contact NFWF program staff to discuss specific land conservation projects.
6. **Improve Aquatic Connectivity:** Remove or retrofit water conveyance structures, such as dikes and levees, to improve flows between rivers and side channels to increase habitat connectivity for fish and other aquatic species. Projects that implement proof-of-concept approaches to increase the frequency and duration of oxbow connection to the Mississippi River main stem are of interest.

To be competitive, each aquatic connectivity proposal and/or aquatic habitat improvement proposal should include a section detailing the pre- and post-intervention freshwater fish monitoring at the site to be conducted either by the applicant or a named partner/subcontractor.

7. **Restoration Response Monitoring:** Develop monitoring protocols to measure Louisiana black bear, swamp rabbit, forest bird, waterfowl and freshwater fish response to habitat restoration and enhancement. Where baseline data is not available, monitoring proposals should establish a baseline measurement. This baseline should then be used to measure change over time as restoration activities are undertaken. This effort may be paired with other monitoring work that federal and state agencies are performing. Monitoring for Louisiana black bear and swamp rabbit should track progress towards species outcomes included in Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley business plan. Applicants are encouraged to contact NFWF program staff prior to submitting a proposal to discuss projects that include species monitoring.

## PROJECT METRICS

To gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund has a list of metrics 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 think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Jon Scott to ([Jonathan.Scott@nfwf.org](mailto:Jonathan.Scott@nfwf.org)) discuss alternatives.

Strategy	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
<b>Bottomland Hardwood Forest Enhancement and Maintenance</b>	LMAV – Improved management practices - Acres under improved management (private)	Enter the number of acres that will be treated to enhance or maintain existing bottomland hardwoods on private lands. Examples of practices include thinning, residual stocking, or invasive species treatments.
	LMAV – Improved management practices - Acres under improved management (public)	Enter the number of acres that will be treated to enhance or maintain existing bottomland hardwoods on public lands. Examples of practices include thinning, residual stocking, or invasive species treatments.
	LMAV – Research - Acres assessed	Enter the total acres to be assessed on lands enrolled in WRP/WRE.
	LMAV – Land, wetland restoration - # acres returned to desired forest condition	Enter the acres of existing bottomland forests that will be restored to minimum <a href="#">desired forest condition</a> .
<b>Restore, Wetland and Floodplain Hydrology</b>	LMAV – Restoring hydrology - Acres with restored hydrology (private lands)	Enter the acres of wetlands and/or floodplain habitat to which hydrological function will be restored on private lands.
	LMAV – Restoring hydrology - Acres with restored hydrology (public lands)	Enter the acres of wetlands and/or floodplain habitat to which hydrological function will be restored on public lands.
<b>Bottomland Hardwood Forest Restoration</b>	LMAV – Land, wetland restoration - Acres restored on private lands	Enter the acres of bottomland hardwood forest that will be established on private lands during the grant period of performance.
	LMAV – Land, wetland restoration - Acres restored on public lands	Enter the acres of bottomland hardwood forest that will be established on public lands during the grant period of performance.
	LMAV – Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on private lands	Enter the number of seedlings that will be planted on private lands.
	LMAV – Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on public lands	Enter the number of seedlings that will be planted on public lands.
<b>Target Outreach, Education and Assistance to Private Landowners, Forest Practitioners and Other Key Constituencies</b>	<b>Note: Projects that will engage private landowners should select all three of the following metrics listed below for both general landowner engagement, as well as landowner engagement specifically targeted to reducing human-black bear conflict:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # people targeted</li> <li>• # people reached</li> <li>• # people with changed behavior</li> </ul> <b>Data for all three metrics will enable NFWF to better understand landowner response to outreach, education and technical assistance efforts.</b>	
	LMAV - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # of conservation demonstration sites	Enter the number of demonstration sites that will be established to educate landowners and land managers on bottomland hardwood restoration and enhancement practices that benefit wildlife.
	LMAV - BMP development - # mgmt plans with BMPs	Enter the number of management plans that will be developed. For projects that will develop both forest restoration/management plans and conservation plans on agricultural lands, please break out the number of plans by type in the metrics notes section.
LMAV - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people targeted	Enter the number of landowners and practitioners that will be targeted by outreach activities, such as direct mail, email, or social media. If applicable, in the notes section, please	



		report the number of people targeted in each underserved/special emphasis category. Outcomes related to reducing human-black bear conflict should be included in the black bear specific metrics.
	LMAV - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached	Enter the number of landowners and practitioners anticipated to be reached through education, training or technical assistance activities. The target value for this metric should be a subset of the “# of people targeted” metric. If applicable, in the notes section, please report the number of people reached in each underserved/special emphasis category. Outcomes related to reducing human-black bear conflict should be included in the black bear specific metrics.
	LMAV - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people with changed behavior	Enter the number of private landowners reached who are expected to implement conservation actions. The target value for this metric should be a subset of the “# of people reached” metric. If applicable, in the notes section, please report the number of people with changed behavior in each underserved/special emphasis category. Outcomes related to reducing human-black bear conflict should be included in the black bear specific metrics.
	LMAV - Economic benefits - # jobs created	Enter the number of new full-time positions that will be created through the project and will provide additional technical assistance and/or project implementation capacity.
	LMAV - Building institutional capacity - # FTE with sufficient training	Enter the number of existing full-time employees that will be provided with training to improve technical knowledge.
	LMAV - Louisiana Black Bear - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people targeted	Enter the number of people that will be targeted to receive education on methods to reduce human-black bear conflict. Examples include people targeted through direct mailings, email and other communications efforts.
	LMAV - Louisiana Black Bear - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached	Enter the number of people expected to be reached through education efforts to reduce human-black bear conflict. The target value for this metric should be a subset of the “# of people targeted” metric. Examples include participation in workshops and other educational events.
	LMAV - Louisiana Black Bear - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people with changed behavior	Enter the number of people expected to change their behavior regarding human-black bear conflict as a result of outreach and education efforts. The target value for this metric should be a subset of the “# of people reached” metric.
<b>Bottomland Hardwood Forest Habitat Conservation</b>	LMAV - Conservation easements - Acres protected under easement	Enter the acres of bottomland hardwood forest and/or wetland habitat that will be protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr).
<b>Improve Aquatic Connectivity and Water Quality</b>	LMAV - Fish passage improvements - Acres of lake habitat opened	Enter the acres of aquatic habitat (stream, river, lake, etc.) that will be reconnected or opened. Examples: improving connectivity and natural flow regimes between the Mississippi River main stem and floodplain and oxbow lakes.
	LMAV - Fish passage improvements - Miles of stream opened	Enter the miles of aquatic habitat that will be reconnected or opened. Examples: secondary channel, oxbow or other water features opened due to barrier removal or improvement. Mile opened is defined as # of new miles that restoration makes accessible for aquatic species. For oxbow lake restoration, record # of miles connecting from main stem to

		oxbow lake. For dike notching, record # of miles of secondary channel. In map tool, include polygon of open stream, dike to be notched and/or accessible secondary stream as appropriate.
	LMAV - Fish passage improvements - # passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of in-stream barriers that will be removed or retrofitted to increase aquatic habitat connectivity.
	LMAV - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with BMPs (private lands)	Enter the number of acres of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) that will be installed on private lands to reduce nutrient or sediment loads. Forest restoration and management practices should not be included in this metric.
	LMAV - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with BMPs (public lands)	Enter the number of acres of agricultural best management practices (BMPs) that will be installed on public lands to reduce nutrient or sediment loads. Forest restoration and management practices should not be included under in metric.
	LMAV – Water Quality - lbs of sediment prevented from entering system annually	Enter the number of pounds of sediment that are estimated to be prevented from entering surface waters as a result of conservation practices implemented.
<b>Restoration Response Monitoring</b>	LMAV - Research - # studies used to inform mgmt	Enter the number of assessments or studies that will be completed to inform species monitoring.
	LMAV - Louisiana Black Bear - Monitoring - # of populations monitored	Enter the number of Louisiana black bear populations that will be monitored.

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal Governments and Organizations, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies, businesses, unincorporated individuals and international organizations. U.S. Federal agencies, businesses and unincorporated individuals are encouraged to partner with applicants, but are not eligible to submit an application.

### Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- 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.
- **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.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund anticipates awarding approximately \$1.4 million in grants in FY 2022. Grant awards are expected to range from \$100,000 to \$500,000, depending on the overall scale of the project. Applicants considering proposals outside of this funding range are encouraged to contact NFWF prior to submitting. This program has one annual application cycle.

**Project Period:** Anticipated completion time for funded projects typically will be 24-36 months following finalization of a grant agreement. Significant progress with project implementation is expected to be achieved in year one, including interim deliverables. 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.

**Matching Funds:** Projects should have a minimum match of 1:1 non-federal cash or in-kind, but larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive.<sup>2</sup> Projects unable to provide a 1:1 non-federal match are eligible, but applicants must contact NFWF to discuss match waiver options prior to submitting a proposal. Applicants are encouraged to describe federal partner contributions in the proposal narrative, although those contributions will not count toward the minimum match requirement.

## 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.

**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.

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

---

<sup>2</sup> Note that landowner contributions being used as match for a Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund grant must be outside of the amount already written into any agency financial assistance contract as a financial assistance contribution.



**Conservation Plan and Context** – Describe how the project fits into and advances an existing conservation plan or strategy, such as NFWF’s [Business Plan for Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley](#), the [North American Waterfowl Management Plan](#), [Partners in Flight Landbird Conservation Plan](#), State Wildlife Action Plans, and other plans that benefit bottomland hardwood forest and wetland habitats and associated wildlife species within the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Proposals also should highlight how these efforts will expand new or existing restoration and conservation initiatives to maximize large-scale ecosystem function.

**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.

**Applicant Demographic Information** – In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic information on applicants and their communities via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers. For more details, please see the Tip Sheet and the Uploads section of Easygrants.

**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.

**USDA Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories** – The historically underserved farmer and rancher categories include those with limited resources, beginning farmers/ranchers, socially disadvantaged (American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics) and veterans. More information can be found at [https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/people/outreach/slbfr/?cid=nrcsdev11\\_001040](https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/people/outreach/slbfr/?cid=nrcsdev11_001040).

The special emphasis categories are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Black, Disability, Women, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Hispanic, and Veterans. More information can be found at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people/employee/sep/>.

## TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information – **Lower MS Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund**.

Applicant Webinar	November 4, 2021, at 3:30 PM Eastern Time
Full Proposal Due Date	December 16, 2021 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time
Review Period	January – May 2022
Awards Announced	June 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” 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:

### **Jon Scott**

Southern Forests Program Director

202-595-2609

[jonathan.scott@nfwf.org](mailto:jonathan.scott@nfwf.org)

### **Zack Bernstein**

Program Coordinator, Southern Regional Office

202-595-2433

[Zachary.Bernstein@nfwf.org](mailto:Zachary.Bernstein@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.