



# Chi-Cal Rivers Fund

## NFWF CONTACTS

### Aislinn Gauchay

Program Director, Great Lakes  
612-564-7284  
aislinn.gauchay@nfwf.org

### Traci Giefer

Senior Program Manager, Great Lakes  
612-564-7296  
traci.giefer@nfwf.org

### Minna Wong

Coordinator, Regional Programs  
202-595-2657  
minna.wong@nfwf.org

## PARTNERS

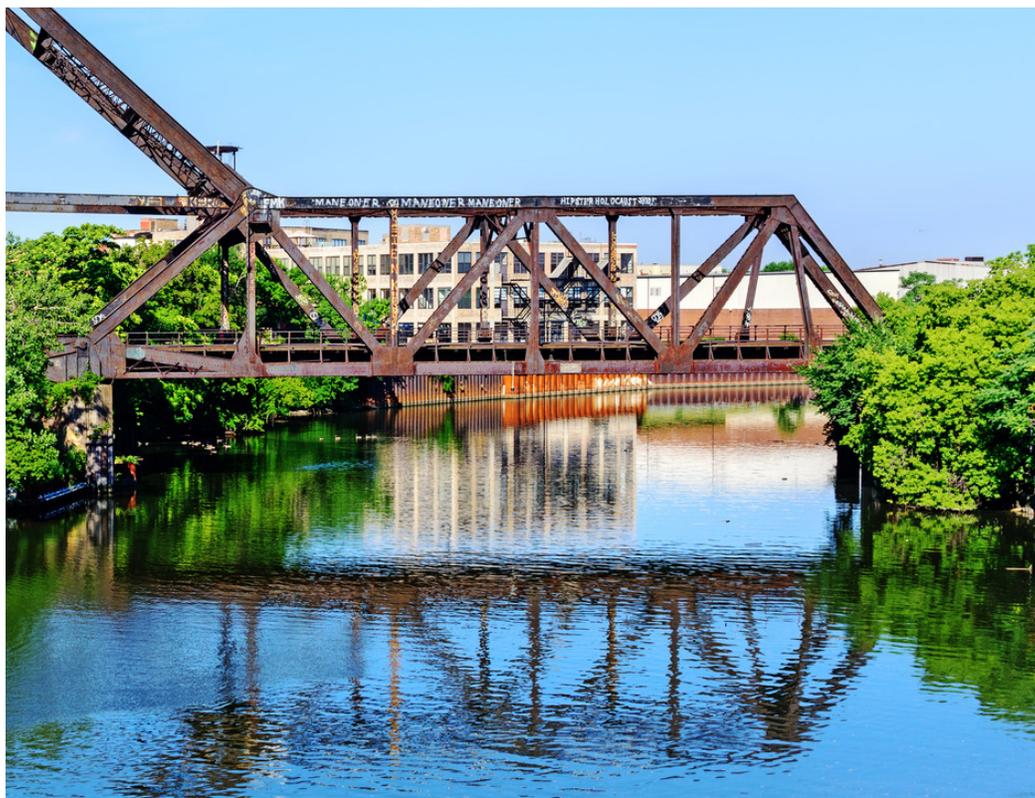
- BNSF Railway
- Cleveland-Cliffs
- Crown Family Philanthropies
- Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
- The Hunter Family Foundation
- The Joyce Foundation
- U.S. EPA
- U.S.D.A. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Walder Foundation

## ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with the public and private sectors to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest private conservation grant-maker, funding more than 19,700 projects and generating a total conservation impact of \$6.8 billion. Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

1133 15th Street, NW  
Suite 1000  
Washington, D.C., 20005  
202-857-0166



Landmark Bridge, Chicago River

## OVERVIEW

The Chicago and Calumet watersheds comprise a highly engineered system of waterways that provide many benefits to the people and wildlife in the region. Despite these services, the waterways have been degraded by many stressors that have significantly reduced the ecological, economic and community values of the system. The Chi-Cal Rivers Fund, a public-private partnership among three federal agencies, two corporations and five private foundations, was created to address these stressors by improving the health, vitality and accessibility of the waterways in the Chicago and Calumet regions by supporting green stormwater infrastructure, habitat enhancement, and public-use improvements.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and BNSF Railway, Cleveland-Cliffs, Crown Family Philanthropies, Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Hunter Family Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S.D.A. Forest Service and the Walder Foundation announced an eighth year of funding for the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund. The six grants announced in 2021 have been awarded \$1.2 million in funding and will generate \$1.6 million in matching contributions, providing a total conservation impact of \$2.8 million.

(continued)



Marsh wetlands in Indiana

**GREEN STORMWATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

The following project seeks to increase on-site stormwater capture and storage and occur in close proximity or otherwise demonstrate benefits to the major waterways in the region. Projects will reduce runoff into sewer systems and help to reduce the discharge of contaminants to local waterways by slowing, storing and filtering rain water through community-based training. Project will also reduce property damage and health risks associated with flooding, reduce municipal costs of managing and treating stormwater, improve aquatic habitats, and promote safe and economically important public uses associated with river systems.

**Implementing Shared Services to Maintain Green Infrastructure in the Calumet Region (IL, IN)**

Grantee: OAI, Inc.  
 Grant Amount: .....\$181,751  
 Matching Funds: .....\$270,000  
 Total Project: .....\$451,751  
 Reduce localized flooding and prevent pollution from entering priority waterways by maintaining green stormwater infrastructure for communities in Illinois and northwest Indiana disproportionately impacted by flooding. Project will provide community-based training and enhance over 1 million square-feet of green infrastructure for self-sustaining maintenance.

**HABITAT ENHANCEMENT**

The following five projects seek to support on-the-ground riparian and in-stream habitat improvements along or near the major waterways of the Chicago and Calumet river

systems. Projects will contribute to healthier fish and wildlife populations by improving wetland habitat, reducing erosion, improving water quality and adding habitat complexity.

**Restoring Riparian Habitat and Improving Public Access to Thorn Creek Tributary (IL)**

Grantee: Friends of the Chicago River  
 Grant Amount: .....\$278,302  
 Matching Funds: .....\$297,429  
 Total Project: .....\$575,731  
 Improve function and accessibility of Thorn Creek by removing invasive species, improving stormwater infiltration, and enhancing habitat for Illinois species of concern such the wood thrush and red-headed woodpecker in Sweet Woods Forest Preserve. Project will restore 118 acres of Thorn Creek resulting in an additional 1.9 million gallons of stormwater infiltrated into the soil per rain event.

**Enhancing Aquatic Habitat and Community Stewardship in the Chicago River (IL)**

Grantee: Shedd Aquarium Society  
 Grant Amount: .....\$159,341  
 Matching Funds: .....\$152,650  
 Total Project: .....\$311,991  
 Install floating wetlands and create in-stream habitat to promote biodiversity and shoreline resilience for wildlife and lead community stewardship activities for the South Branch of the Chicago River. Project will engage the public, improve 2 acres of greenspace and install 35 floating wetlands for native fish and migratory bird species.



Wood thrush

**Improving Riparian Habitat and Public Access to Deep River in New Chicago (IN)**

Grantee: Shirley Heinze Land Trust, Inc.  
 Grant Amount: .....\$216,093  
 Matching Funds: .....\$176,189  
 Total Project: ..... \$392,282

Restore riparian habitat for birds and improve public greenspace in underserved community through habitat restoration, invasive species control and installing green stormwater infrastructure along Deep River in the Town of New Chicago. Project will improve 0.55 acres of public greenspace through community-led process and restore 23.7 acres of riparian bird habitat.

**Enhancing Corridor Health of the East Branch of the Little Calumet River (IN)**

Grantee: Save the Dunes Conservation Fund, Inc.  
 Grant Amount: .....\$210,783  
 Matching Funds: .....\$558,837  
 Total Project: .....\$769,620

Restore and improve habitat and public access along the East Branch of the Little Calumet River corridor to enhance water quality, wildlife habitat and stormwater storage. Project will advance regional goals through a collaborative approach and restore 32 acres of prairie and floodplain habitat, control invasive species on 45 acres and create 7.7 miles of riverfront trails.

**Calumet Tree Conservation Corps (IN)**

Grantee: The Student Conservation Association  
 Grant Amount: .....\$183,225  
 Matching Funds: .....\$183,280  
 Total Project: .....\$366,505

Reduce stormwater runoff and create urban habitat by planting 500 new trees in northwest Indiana. Project will build upon previous investments and continue to improve water quality at a regional scale while engaging the community and volunteers.