

# Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund

## 2022 Request For Proposals

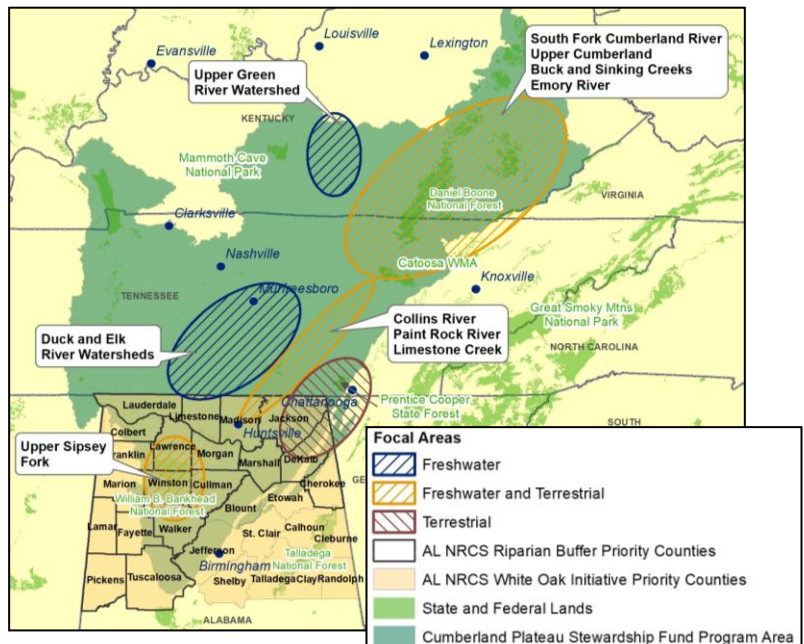
Applicant Webinar ([Register Here](#)): **Wednesday, December 15, 2021, at 2:00 PM Eastern Time**  
 Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, February 10, 2022 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

### OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals within the Cumberland Plateau region that will help accelerate the restoration and enhancement of critical forest and freshwater habitats and associated wildlife species in the region. Funding is provided by the USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bezos Earth Fund, International Paper’s Forestland Stewards Partnership, and the Altria Group. Approximately \$4 million is expected to be available for grants this funding cycle.

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Projects within the Cumberland Plateau in Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia are eligible with preference given to projects located within the identified focal areas ([View Interactive Map](#)). Focal areas were selected by analyzing upland and riparian forest and freshwater systems, and represent locations with the greatest potential for restoration and benefit to priority species. These focal areas are based on resource mapping, interviews with the practitioners in the field, funding sources for this RFP, and capacity to carry out the work.



### PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund (Fund) seeks to support multiple strategic objectives, including implementation of the [Forestland Stewards partnership business plan](#), which includes strategic priorities and goals to enhance forest ecosystems for the benefit of wildlife species and freshwater systems, while promoting and supporting working forests.

The Fund also seeks to support implementation of the [Shortleaf Pine Restoration Plan](#) and the [Restoring Sustainability for White Oak and Upland Oak Communities: An Assessment and Conservation Plan](#), for those portions of the historical shortleaf pine and white oak/upland oak ranges that fall within the Fund’s program area, as well as restoration and enhancement of aquatic habitat and species within high priority watersheds identified through [The Southeastern Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Strategy](#) that are located within the Fund’s program area.

**Conservation Co-Benefits:** Projects that will implement habitat restoration or improvement practices that benefit wildlife while also sequestering carbon and/or improving water quantity or quality are encouraged, with a particular interest in tree planting projects. Applicants should reach out to program staff prior to

submitting a proposal to discuss projects that will address carbon and water outcomes. Note: NFWF intends to calculate the estimated carbon outcome associated with any given project. These calculations will not be used for carbon credits, but rather for narrative and demonstration of the potential carbon value of any project and conservation practice(s) supported through this program.

**Community Impact and Engagement:** Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes ensuring traditional knowledge elevation. Additionally, projects should engage community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) to help design, implement, and maintain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award.

Projects should seek to implement one or more of the strategies below to improve shortleaf pine, white oak and other upland oak forest, riparian forest, soil health, water quality, and/or in-stream habitats and populations of at-risk, listed and other wildlife species, such as northern bobwhite and prairie warbler, as well as fish, amphibians and other aquatic species.

- 1. Establishing Shortleaf Pine and Upland Oak Forests:** Includes projects that create new shortleaf pine, white oak and/or other upland oak forest habitat, including site preparation and planting on public and private lands. Proposals should describe all necessary site preparation for planting, number of acres and seedlings that will be planted, timing of when planting is expected to be completed and summarize plans to manage planted stands. Projects that expect to plant a mix of tree species should include an estimate of the number of seedlings of each species that will be planted in their proposal.
- 2. Enhancing and Maintaining Existing Shortleaf Pine and Upland Oak Ecosystems:** Includes projects that support the enhancement and management of existing shortleaf pine, white oak, and/or other upland oak forest systems on public and private lands, with an emphasis on improving forest conditions to benefit wildlife. The following practices are eligible and applicants must demonstrate how these strategies support sustainable shortleaf pine, white oak and/or upland oak ecosystem management:

#### Prescribed Burning

- Increase application of prescribed fire on private and public lands, including capacity, coordination and collaboration through fire teams, prescribed burn associations, and/or other strategies.
- Provide technical assistance, training and/or other incentives to increase prescribed burning on private lands, including, but not limited to assisting USDA service center staff in writing burn plans and implementing financial assistance contracts through NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and other programs.
- Pursue innovations and address specific barriers or roadblocks to prescribed burning, including strategies that may be transferred to other regions.

#### Other Silvicultural Treatments

- Over-story treatments, including thinning and pre-commercial thinning, aimed at reducing over-story tree density, improving over-story structure, underplanting, release of shortleaf pine, white oak and/or other upland oak regeneration, or to implement uneven-aged or patch-cut silvicultural treatments.
- Mid-story treatments including mechanical and chemical treatments to remove or control mid-story encroachment.
- Planting native under-story species to improve wildlife habitat and support the application of prescribed fire.

- Invasive species treatments including herbicide or mechanical single or multiple treatments to control non-native, invasive plant species.
- 3. Restoring Abandoned and Legacy Mine Lands:** Focus is on projects that reforest abandoned and/or legacy mine lands, including site preparation and planting, and can take place on public and private lands, with an emphasis on planting native tree species to benefit wildlife, reduce erosion and runoff, and sequester carbon. Proposals may also include practices to enhance or maintain existing forests on abandoned and/or legacy mines, such as thinning and invasive species removal, to improve wildlife habitat. Proposals for planting should describe all necessary site preparation, number of acres and seedlings that will be planted, timing of when planting is expected to be completed and summarize plans to manage planted stands. Projects are encouraged to use the [Forestry Reclamation Approach](#) as outlined by the U.S. Department of the Interior’s Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.
- 4. Restoring and Enhancing Riparian Forests and Watershed Health to Support Aquatic Species:** Includes projects that restore riparian forests, implement forestry and agricultural best management practices, and/or restore in-stream habitats to improve soil, forest, and watershed health, enhance freshwater habitat and support at-risk aquatic species. Applicants seeking support for riparian or in-stream restoration projects should reference the [The Southeast Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Strategy](#) for additional information on priority watersheds within the Cumberland Plateau program boundary. A variety of practices are eligible including, but not limited to:

Restore and Enhance Riparian Forests

- Reforest riparian buffers with native riparian forest species.
- Implement forest management practices, such as thinning, that will improve wildlife habitat.
- Control invasive species, such as hemlock woolly adelgid, which threaten riparian forest health.

Improve Conservation Practices on Agricultural Lands

- Increase adoption of conservation cover, cover crops, reduced tillage, and diversified crop rotations.
- Promote responsible incorporation of crop residue, manures, and other sources of organic matter into soil management systems.
- Establish and enhance farmer-led education and outreach programs to drive increased adoption of soil health practices and to promote stream health.
- Install fencing and alternative watering systems to exclude livestock from streams.
- Implement prescribed/rotational grazing and complementary conservation practices, such as using native warm season grass forage to augment non-native forages (see NRCS-WLFW link [Science to Solutions report](#)), to improve or maintain the quantity and quality of food and/or cover available for wildlife, reduce erosion, promote soil health, help sequester carbon, and improve water quality and quantity.

For projects implementing conservation practices on agricultural lands, applicants should seek to utilize existing federal, state, and local cost-share and incentive programs to finance implementation of practices, with NFWF funding for either technical assistance or practice implementation used to strategically fill gaps in existing funding programs. Where NFWF funding is sought to cover all or a portion of costs for practice implementation, applicants are encouraged to describe why other public programs are insufficient or otherwise inappropriate for financing proposed practice implementation.

Restore Aquatic Connectivity and Improve In-Stream Habitat Conditions

- Remove or retrofit stream barriers (low-head dams) and stream crossings (culverts, concrete fords), and/or other in-stream restoration practices to improve aquatic habitat within focal watersheds ([View](#)

[Map](#)). **Note:** Preference will be given to proposals that remove or retrofit high priority barriers or crossings within watersheds where barrier/crossing surveys and/or assessments are being developed or have been completed with an emphasis on lower cost/high gain methods in locations known to fragment habitat for priority species.

- 5. Expanding and Coordinating Technical Assistance and Outreach:** Includes projects that implement targeted outreach and assistance to measurably increase private landowner and/or producer participation in conservation practices. Proposals must estimate the number of acres and/or miles to be restored or enhanced as a result of proposed technical assistance and outreach activities. Projects should effectively align with and complement other existing private land initiatives, implementation plans or programs, such as [US Fish & Wildlife Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program](#) and [USDA's Working Lands for Wildlife eastern hellbender](#) and [northern bobwhite](#) priorities. NFWF also seeks projects that include outreach and technical assistance to, and enhanced participation of underserved landowners, including [USDA's historically underserved farmers and ranchers](#).
- **Increase outreach and technical assistance delivery success:** Support increased landowner and/or producer outreach and technical assistance. Strategies may include:
    - Increasing capacity through the hiring of staff or contractors to provide technical assistance on private lands, develop forest management plans, prescribed burn plans, conservation grazing plans, and/or conservation plans, and assist with implementation of restoration and management treatments, including but not limited to practices funded through existing and new financial assistance contracts.
    - Implementing innovative methods to engage private landowners or producers and expand on-the-ground restoration and protection activities on private lands, such as utilizing social marketing and preference data to identify and better understand landowner or producer motivations and barriers to participation in conservation efforts.
    - Targeting outreach for private landowners and producers and working with NRCS, FWS and other partners to prioritize, plan and deliver financial assistance such as EQIP, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, Working Lands for Wildlife and other programs to improve habitat and support at-risk species.
  - **Advancing new market-oriented and/or incentive programs:** Pilot innovative, market-oriented solutions and incentive programs that stimulate landowner participation in shortleaf pine and/or oak ecosystem recovery, agricultural best management practice implementation, riparian forest restoration, and/or in-stream habitat restoration efforts. Examples of strategies include utilizing ecosystem service payments to support restoration and/or 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.
- 6. Conservation Easements:** Limited funding is available to facilitate targeted conservation easement projects that protect existing, high quality shortleaf pine, oak and/or riparian forest habitat, or key sites targeted for shortleaf pine and/or oak ecosystem and/or riparian forest restoration that are part of larger forest restoration proposals. Preference will be given to projects that protect working forests. Requests for conservation easement funding should not exceed 20% of the total proposal request and should be for transaction or due diligence costs, such as surveys, appraisals, and environmental reports and/or to support staff or contractor capacity to facilitate the conservation easement process. In limited instances, highly leveraged projects will be considered for acquisition costs. Please contact Jon Scott ([jonathan.scott@nfwf.org](mailto:jonathan.scott@nfwf.org)) to discuss specific land conservation projects.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Cumberland Plateau Stewardship 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 ([Jonathan.scott@nfwf.org](mailto:Jonathan.scott@nfwf.org)) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Projects that may involve organizations or producers that identify as one or more of the federal Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories (described on page 11) are encouraged to apply and should report impact on such categories in the notes section of their selected metrics shown below.

Strategy	Easygrants Metric	Additional Guidance
<b>Establish Shortleaf Pine and Oak Forests</b>	CPF - Shortleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on private land	Enter the number of acres of shortleaf pine and/or oak planted on private lands.
	CPF - Shortleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on public land	Enter the number of acres of shortleaf pine and/or oak planted on public lands.
	CPF - Shortleaf Pine - Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on private lands	Enter the number of shortleaf pine and/or oak seedlings planted on private lands. To the extent possible, please breakout the number of shortleaf pine and oak seedlings in the notes section.
	CPF - Shortleaf Pine - Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on public lands	Enter the number of shortleaf pine and/or oak seedlings planted on public lands. To the extent possible, please breakout the number of shortleaf pine and oak seedlings in the notes section.
<b>Enhance and Maintain Existing Shortleaf Pine and Oak Ecosystems</b>	CPF - BMP implementation for prescribed burns - Acres private land burned	Enter the number of acres of prescribed burning completed on shortleaf pine and/or oak habitat on private lands. Include site prep burning in this metric.
	CPF - BMP implementation for prescribed burns - Acres public land burned	Enter the number of acres of prescribed burning completed on shortleaf pine and/or oak habitat on public lands. Include site prep burning in this metric.
	CPF - Shortleaf Pine - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (private)	Enter the number of acres of over-story treated, mid-story treated, native under-story established, and/or invasive plant species treated within existing shortleaf pine and/or oak habitat on private lands. Acres of prescribed fire should <u>not</u> be included in this total. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	CPF - Shortleaf Pine - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (public)	Enter the number of acres of over-story treated, mid-story treated, native under-story established, and/or invasive plant species treated within existing shortleaf pine and/or oak habitat on public lands. Acres of prescribed fire should <u>not</u> be included in this total. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.



<b>Restore and Enhance Riparian Forests and Watershed Health to Support Aquatic Species</b>	CPF - Riparian habitat vegetation - Riparian restoration - Acres restored on private land	Enter the number of acres of riparian forest planted on private lands.
	CPF - Riparian habitat vegetation - Riparian restoration - Acres restored on public land	Enter the number of acres of riparian forest planted on public lands.
	CPF - Riparian habitat vegetation - Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on private lands	Enter the number of riparian tree seedlings planted on private lands.
	CPF - Riparian habitat vegetation - Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on public lands	Enter the number of riparian tree seedlings planted on public lands.
	CPF - Riparian habitat vegetation - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (private)	Enter the number of acres of riparian forest under improved management on private lands.
	CPF - Riparian habitat vegetation - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (public)	Enter the number of acres of riparian forest under improved management on public lands.
	CPF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with BMPs	Enter the number of acres of best management practices implemented on agricultural lands.
	CPF - BMP development - # mgmt plans into which BMPs were incorporated	Enter the number of forest management, conservation and/or grazing plans developed that include recommended best management practices for forest and/or agricultural lands. If applicable, please break out the number of management plans by type in the notes section.
	CPF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with conservation tillage	Enter the number of acres of conservation tillage implemented on agricultural lands.
	CPF - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with cover crops	Enter the number of acres of cover crops established on agricultural lands.
	CPF - Improved Management Practices - Acres with managed grazing	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of associated grazing infrastructure).
	CPF - Improved management practices - Miles under improved mgmt (private)	Enter the number of miles of riparian habitat under improved management on private lands.
	CPF - Improved management practices - Miles under improved mgmt (public)	Enter the number of miles of riparian habitat under improved management on public lands.
CPF - Fish passage improvements - Miles of stream opened	Enter the number of miles of stream habitat that will be opened/reconnected by removing or retrofitting in-stream barriers.	

<b>Expand and Coordinate Technical Assistance and Outreach</b>	<b>Note: Projects that will engage private landowners and/or producers should select all three of the following metrics:</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/producer response to outreach, education and technical assistance efforts.</b>	
	CPF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people targeted	Enter the number of landowners and/or producers targeted by outreach activities. Examples include direct mailings and targeted media advertisements. If applicable, in the notes section, please report the number of people targeted in each underserved/special emphasis category.
CPF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached	Enter the number of landowners and/or producers anticipated to be reached through educational meetings, trainings and/or technical assistance. The target value for this metric should be a subset of the “# of people targeted” metric. If the target value includes landowners or producers reached through more than one activity, please break out in the notes section. If applicable, in the notes section, please report the number of people reached in each underserved/special emphasis category.	
CPF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people with changed behavior	Enter the number of landowners and/or producers reached who are expected to implement conservation actions. Examples include developing a conservation plan, enrolling in a financial assistance program, implementing a conservation practice. 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.	
<b>Conservation Easements</b>	CPF - Conservation easements - Acres protected under easement	Acres of shortleaf pine, oak and/or riparian forest habitat protected by conservation easements.

## **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**

- 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**

The Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund anticipates awarding approximately \$4 million in grants in 2022. Grant awards are expected to range from \$100,000 to \$500,000. Applicants considering proposals outside of this funding range are encouraged to contact NFWF prior to submitting. This program has one annual application cycle and awards approximately 6-10 grants per year.

**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. 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 1:1 match.

**Work on Public Lands:** Work performed on Federal, state, and local public lands are eligible across the Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund geography. **Projects that focus on public lands are strongly encouraged to include work on private lands as part of the broader project scope as some primary funders of this RFP only support proposals/expenses on private lands.** Please contact Jon Scott at [jonathan.scott@nfwf.org](mailto:jonathan.scott@nfwf.org) to discuss potential work on public lands prior to submitting an application.

## **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 Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund’s habitat and species goals and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics that will be tracked and measured to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the request for proposals.

**Conservation Plan and Context** – Describe how the project advances the [Forestland Stewards partnership business plan](#). When applicable, proposals should also highlight how efforts will support other conservation plans, such as the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Plan and/or expand new or existing restoration and conservation initiatives, such as the [Shortleaf Pine Initiative](#) and [Shortleaf Pine Restoration Plan](#), the [White Oak Initiative](#) and the [Restoring Sustainability for White Oak and Upland Oak Communities: An Assessment and Conservation Plan](#) and the [The Southeast Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Strategy](#) to maximize large-scale ecosystem function.

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

**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, and design and implementation. Applications involving private lands should be shared with the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist for input and guidance before submission ([View NRCS State conservationist contacts](#)).

**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.

**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.

#### **Letters of Support**

- Letter(s) from the appropriate State forestry office(s) highlighting how the proposed project is being coordinated with their office are recommended for projects that include work on state and/or private lands ([View state forest agency contacts](#)).
- Letter(s) from the appropriate NRCS State conservationist(s) acknowledging how the applicant is coordinating with NRCS are recommended for projects that include work on private lands ([View NRCS State conservationist contacts](#)).
- Letter(s) from the appropriate State Department of Wildlife Conservation and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acknowledging how the proposed project supports a State Wildlife Action Plan or conservation and recovery of at-risk or listed species or the [Partners for Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Plan](#) are recommended.
- Letters documenting the support/contributions of all other project partners are strongly encouraged.

**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.

**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**

**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.

**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.

**USDA Historically 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 *Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund*.

Applicant Webinar [ <a href="#">Register Here</a> ]	December 15, 2021, 2:00-3:00 PM, Eastern Time
Full Proposal Due Date	February 10, 2022, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Review Period	February 2022-May 2022
Awards Announced	May 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.