



NEW ENGLAND FORESTS AND RIVERS FUND

2022 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, July 14, 2022 by 11:59 PM EDT**

Applicant Webinar: **Thursday, May 12, 2022, 10:30-11:30 AM EDT** [Register Here](#)

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals for the New England Forests and Rivers Fund (NEFRF) to restore and sustain healthy forests and rivers that provide habitat for diverse fish and wildlife populations. The program will advance this goal by investing in projects that:

- Strengthen the health of forest systems by improving the management of public and private forestlands to create a mosaic of mixed-age forests in the region;
- Provide incentives to strengthen habitat conservation on working forests through flexible technical assistance that is appropriate for the forest stage(s) being targeted;
- Accelerate adoption of conservation practices on agricultural lands, with a particular focus on livestock operations;
- Improve the quality of river and stream systems through targeted riparian and stream restoration; and,
- Reduce barriers to fish passage and increase fish access to high quality habitat.

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 and should consider traditional knowledge where relevant. 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.

More than \$2.3 million is available this year. Funding is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bezos Earth Fund, Zoetis and the Avangrid Foundation.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Projects from *throughout* Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont are invited, as well as projects within the Lake Champlain, St. Lawrence River and Upper Hudson River watersheds in New York. See the map “[2022 RFP Map](#)“ to view the map in more detail.

New England Forests and Rivers RFP



NOTE: Applicants seeking funding for fish passage projects in Connecticut and/or water quality projects that benefit Long Island Sound are strongly encouraged to apply to the Long Island Sound Futures Fund ([LISFF](#)) rather than NEFRF. LISFF has significantly more funding available. LISFF proposals are due May 19, 2022.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Priority will be given to projects that address at least one of the following strategies.

1. Restore and Manage Forest Blocks

NFWF will invest in the management of forest blocks to enhance age and structural diversity that demonstrates improved forest conditions for native wildlife. Projects are strongly

encouraged that target private landowners within the project areas for golden-winged warbler and New England cottontail under the Natural Resource Conservation Service's [Working Lands for Wildlife](#) initiative.

- **Planning:** Conduct planning at the landscape, forest block (5,000+acres) and parcel scale to support forest management that achieves a targeted mix of age and structural diversity that is adaptable to meeting the needs and interests of individual landowners, while providing vital fish and wildlife habitat.
- **Forest Block Restoration:** Implement a range of forest management practices and prescriptions to create a diversity of age and structure across contiguous forest blocks. Projects that engage landowners with a range of property sizes and interests are strongly encouraged, including public lands, family-owned woodlands, commercial forests, utility rights-of-way, etc.
- **Outreach and Technical Assistance:** Execute innovative outreach and marketing strategies to engage target audiences (e.g., family woodland owners, consulting foresters, loggers), in adopting forest management practices that enhance habitat conditions. Proposals should clearly describe how relationships with willing landowners will be managed, and by whom, in order to ensure landowners receive ongoing support for planning, financing and transitioning to on-the-ground implementation.

2. Restore Aquatic Ecosystems

NFWF will invest in projects that strive to restore river and floodplain function, water quality, and enhance the long-term persistence of native aquatic species including eastern brook trout, diadromous fishes, and turtles. Projects are strongly encouraged that target private landowners to benefit Blandings, wood and spotted turtles and contributed to the goals of the Natural Resource Conservation Service's [Working Lands for Wildlife Northeast Turtles initiative](#). For eastern brook trout-focused work, projects that reconnect and expand existing allopatric brook trout population patches will be considered highest priority.

- **Restore Connectivity:** Remove or replace under-sized or perched culverts and small dams that are barriers to aquatic organism passage and/or result in artificial impoundments and higher water temperatures. Projects should seek to connect native fish to key spawning, rearing, and refuge habitats. Projects should include a monitoring plan to assess changes in run counts as a result of passage improvements for diadromous fish. Projects may support on-the-ground restoration and stream barrier surveys to determine priorities for future connectivity restoration. Projects are encouraged to demonstrate the benefits of aquatic connectivity projects to multiple species, as well as the resilience benefits to human communities (i.e., by reducing flood risk and the risk of failing infrastructure).
- **Restore Riparian and In-stream Habitat:** Restore riparian areas with native vegetation to reduce stream temperature, improve water quality and enhance reciprocal exchanges between aquatic-terrestrial habitats.

Special Opportunity: This year the program has dedicated, private funding from the Bezos Earth Fund for riparian forest buffer restoration projects that improve habitat and store/sequester carbon. Applicants are encouraged to contact John Wright (john.wright@nfwf.org) for more information.

Enhance habitat complexity through large wood additions and improving wood recruitment through upland and riparian forest restoration.

- **Improve Conservation on Agricultural Lands:** Provide technical and financial assistance to address all conservation concerns on farms that have the greatest benefit for fish and wildlife, including wetland and riparian restoration, livestock exclusion fencing, barnyard management, soil health practices, etc. Projects should implement conservation practices that meet or exceed the performance of related federal and state-approved methods and specifications, unless flexibility is necessary to demonstrate an innovative approach or technology. Outreach should target farms that have conservation, manure management, and/or nutrient management plans in place, as appropriate. Where these plans are not in place, projects should prioritize developing plans prior to implementing conservation practices.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the *New England Forests and Rivers 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 john.wright@nfwf.org to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Activity	Metric	Guidance
Priority: Restore and Manage Forest Blocks		
Planning	NEFR - Tool development for decision-making - # tools developed	Enter the number of forest management decision support tools that encourage landscape level planning to manage for an appropriate mix of age and structural diversity.
	NEFR - Forest Management Planning - # of acres covered by dynamic forest plans	Enter the total acres covered by new forest block or parcel scale forest management plans.
Forest Block Restoration	NEFR - Improved management practices - Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres of forest management implemented to enhance forest habitat. In NOTES section, indicate successional stage and any species that are specifically targeted by the project.
Outreach and Technical Assistance	NEFR - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached	Enter the number of landowners who respond to outreach by requesting information, inquiring about how to get assistance, signing up for a workshop, etc. In NOTES section indicate the number of acres owned by the landowners reached.
	NEFR – Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance - # of people with changed behavior	Enter the number of landowners and/or land managers who demonstrated changed behavior by applying land management recommendations from a professional.
Priority: Restore Aquatic Ecosystems		

Restore Connectivity	NEFR - Fish passage improvements - # passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of fish passage barriers rectified. In NOTES section, indicate any species that are specifically targeted by the project.
	NEFR – Fish passage improvements - # miles of stream opened	Enter the number of miles of stream opened. In NOTES section, indicate any species that are specifically targeted by the project.
	NEFR - Fish passage improvements - Acres of lake/pond opened	Enter the number of acres of lake/pond habitat opened. In NOTES section, indicate any species that are specifically targeted by the project.
Restore Riparian Habitat and In-stream Habitat	NEFR – Land, wetland restoration- # of trees planted	Enter # acres of TREES planted. In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), average # of trees per acre planted, and forest type (broadleaf, conifer, swamp--either broadleaf or conifer, shrub).
	NEFR - Riparian restoration - Miles restored	Enter the number of miles of riparian forest restored. In NOTES section, indicate any species that are specifically targeted by the project.
	NEFR - Instream restoration - Miles restored	Enter the number of miles restored in-stream (changes to stream channel such as raising/lowering the stream bed, changes in direction of stream flow, grading of stream banks, and adding in-stream structures such as woody debris). In NOTES section, indicate any species that are specifically targeted by the project.
	NEFR - Wetland restoration - Acres restored	Enter # acres of WETLAND (not riparian or instream) habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (Marsh, Tidal marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp) and indicate % of vegetation on pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%). If you are restoring riparian forest use the acres of field buffer created metric.
Improve Conservation on Agricultural Lands	NEFR - 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 grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice.
	NEFR - BMP implementation for livestock manure - Tons of manure	Enter the tons of manure converted to value-added products, for example biochar and other fertilizers, etc.
	NEFR - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with conservation tillage	Enter the number of cropland acres with conservation tillage practices. Please describe conservation tillage practices in the NOTES section.
	NEFR - BMP implementation for	Enter the number of miles of fencing installed

	livestock fencing - Miles of fencing installed	
	NEFR - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with cover crops	Enter the number of cropland acres with cover crops practices. Please describe the cover crop practices in the NOTES section.
	NEFR - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with enhanced nutrient mgt	Enter the number of cropland acres with enhanced nutrient management practices other than or in addition to conservation tillage or cover crops. Please describe the nutrient management practices in the NOTES section.
	NEFR - Land restoration – Acres of field buffers created	Enter the # of acres of FIELD BUFFER created. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland), and the dominant vegetation being planted (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp).
	NEFR – Number of people reached	Enter the number of landowners who respond to outreach by requesting information, inquiring about how to get assistance, signing up for a workshop, etc. In NOTES section indicate the number of acres owned by the landowners reached.
	NEFR– Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance - # of people with changed behavior	Enter the number of landowners and/or land managers who demonstrated changed behavior by applying land management recommendations from a professional.
Other Activities		
Restore Pollinator Habitat	NEFR – Land Restoration – Acres restored	Enter # acres of habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow, tidal marsh, swamp, seagrass).
Land Protection	NEFR - Conservation easements - Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr). Assuming the specific parcel(s) has been identified, in the NOTES indicate what % of natural land cover would have been cleared in the absence of the easement(s).
	NEFR - Land acquisitions - Acres acquired in fee	Enter # acres acquired in fee. If the parcel has been identified, in the NOTES indicate whether there is a competing offer (Yes/No) or potential zoning change (Yes/No), and what % of natural land cover would be cleared in the absence of the acquisition(s).
Tree Planting	NEFR – Land, wetland restoration- # of trees planted	Enter the number of trees planted. In the NOTES section state the density (trees per acre), expected mortality (%), landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), # of acres, and forest type planted (broadleaf, conifer, swamp--either broadleaf or conifer,

		shrub).
Conduct Native Trout Inventory and Assessments	NEFR - Eastern Brook Trout - Research - # sites assessed	Enter the number of eastern brook trout population patches being assessed.
Monitor Native Trout and River Herring	NEFR – Monitoring – Miles being monitored	Enter the number of miles being monitored for eastern brook trout and/or river herring. In NOTES section, indicate whether it is eastern brook trout and/or river herring that is specifically monitored by the project.
Wildlife population monitoring	NEFR - Acres monitored	In NOTES section, indicate the species being monitored.
Engaging volunteers in restoration activities	NEFR – Volunteer Participation -# volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers participating in projects.
Research	NEFR - # studies completed whose findings are used to adapt management/ inform management decisions	Enter # studies completed whose findings are used to adapt management/ inform management decisions.
	NEFR - Management or Governance Planning - # plans developed with input from multiple stakeholders	Enter the number of plans developed that had input from multiple stakeholders.

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.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.

- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The New England Forests and Rivers Fund will award up to approximately \$2.3 million in grants this year. Grant requests must range from \$50,000 to \$500,000. Requests above or below that range will not be considered for funding. The program awards approximately 12 to 15 grants per year. Projects should begin within six months of the award date and be completed within three years of the agreed start date. These grants strongly encourage non-federal matching contributions valued at 50% or more of the total project costs (1:1 ratio).

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 and Work Plan – 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.

Partnership and Community Impact – The applicant organization partners and engages collaboratively with diverse local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the proposed project. This ensures long-term sustainability and success of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Non-traditional partners or communities are enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project. Describe the community characteristics of the project area, identify any communities impacted, describe outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Use demographic data to support descriptions and submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

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.

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.

OTHER

Applicant Demographic Information – In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic demographic information on applicants and their organizations via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions. 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.

TIMELINE

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

Applicant Webinar (Register)	Thursday, May 12, 10:30 AM, EDT
Full Proposal Due Date	Thursday, July 14, 11:59 PM, EDT
Review Period	August - September
Awards Announced	Early November

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on your homepage, click the “Apply for Funding” button and select this RFP’s “Funding Opportunity” from the list of options.

3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. 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:
John.wright@nfwf.org

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.

Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.