Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program
2022 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Overview Webinar: **July 21, 2022 11:00AM PT / 2:00PM ET**
Pre-Proposal Due Date: **August 25, 2022 by 8:59PM PT / 11:59PM ET**
Full Proposal Webinar: **September 2, 2022 11:00AM PT / 2:00PM ET**
Full Proposal Due Date: **October 25, 2022 by 8:59PM PT / 11:59PM ET**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc., the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, BNSF Railway and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are pleased to announce up to $1,500,000 in funding this year for the continued support for the effective implementation of three key strategies to aid in the recovery of the Southern Resident killer whale (SRKW) Distinct Population Segment.

Conservation strategies for this program include:

- **Increase prey availability**: support projects that increase availability of key salmon runs that are a critical part of the Southern Resident population's diet.

- **Improve habitat quality**: support projects that reduce threats to priority killer whale habitat from pollution and contaminants, vessel traffic and noise.

- **Strengthen management through research**: support research to improve monitoring of demographics and distribution, health assessments and effectiveness of management actions.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Most awarded projects will focus on the habitats used by the SRKW population or its prey in or surrounding the Salish Sea. Proposals that work in other locations such as the Columbia River Basin, coastal Washington, or on other killer whale populations are eligible for funding, however priority will be given to projects with a strong nexus to SRKW recovery. Some geographic priorities are specific to the priority strategies and are referenced below for further guidance.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The most competitive projects under the 2022 cycle of the Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program will directly implement projects under the following priority topic areas. **Applicants should list which priority area(s) they are targeting in their proposal narrative.** Projects outside of these priority areas or that indirectly influence these topics are still eligible for funding provided they support the goals and Priority 1 activities outlined in the Implementation Schedule from the Recovery Plan for Southern Resident Killer Whales or recommendations from

the [Southern Resident Orca Task Force Report](#).

Increase Prey Availability: Projects under this priority will seek to increase Chinook salmon populations to the size and numbers that can support SRKW nutritional needs. These activities can include both hatchery and habitat related actions as well as actions to support forage fish restoration when that is seen as a limiting factor for priority runs. Projects will be reviewed against their contribution to Chinook runs that are important to SRKW ([click here for prioritized list](#)). Activities of particular interest for 2022 include:

- Support for habitat restoration of priority runs in Puget Sound watersheds and nearshore habitats. Large woody debris (LWD) placement, riparian plantings along denuded agricultural and urban corridors, floodplain restoration and shoreline hardening alternatives in estuarine areas are of particular interest. Projects proposing barrier removal should present data on the current density of Chinook below the barrier and the state of habitat above the barrier. Projects under this priority should reference the relative priority of these actions in existing conservation or restoration planning documents (such as an ESA recovery plan, Save our Watersheds report).
- Building capacity for implementation (trained workforce) or help increase opportunities for other dollars (planning/design work). Narratives should be specific on the characterization of the capacity needed and what watersheds and salmon runs would benefit.
- Increase hatchery production where it is appropriate to do so for Chinook runs that have strong nexus with SRKW population needs. Projects under this priority must have a letter of support from Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and outline how the impacts to wild stocks will be reduced/monitored/mitigated from the increase in production. Hatchery proposals that work with other NFWF partners and current projects on release protocols to test increases in survivorship through increasing the release window will be a higher priority for funding.

- Explore opportunities to generate/protect forage fish and smolt migration habitat through coordinated efforts that engage multiple landowners and help to streamline the permitting process. Efforts to reduce predation of forage fish and fry throughout these migration corridors (i.e. removal of pinniped haul-out structures, differing release times of fry), will also be considered and should include monitoring efforts to demonstrate the relative success of these efforts.

Improve Habitat Quality: Projects under this priority will work to identify and reduce tangible land-based and in-water threats to the SRKW population. There is particular interest in projects that partner and coordinate with existing programs that may not have a SRKW focus but bring other resources and expertise on habitat quality issues to the needs of the population. The highest priority for the 2022 cycle is for:

- Projects that seek to increase awareness and compliance of the recreational boating sector with vessel regulations around whales through activities such as signage at marinas and licensing programs and targeting specific audiences like charters and rental boaters that may be unfamiliar with local regulations. Competitive projects will include a monitoring component to evaluate the success of outreach efforts on the targeted audience in both

awareness and compliance.

- Projects that work to implement priority action items in the [Puget Sound Partnership 2022-2026 Action Agenda](#) that can lead to improved water quality in known killer whale habitat. Competitive projects under this category will build partnerships with existing efforts to address threats of run-off, contaminants and other pollutants that have been identified as a health risk to the SRKW population.

Strengthen Management through Research: Projects under this priority seek to fill critical gaps in knowledge that prevent effective mitigative action of key threats to killer whale populations as presented in the two previous categories. All projects under this category should be of the highest priority to population recovery and have a direct applied relevance to management needs. The most competitive proposals will have a representative of the intended management authority as part of their project team for consultation on what information is needed and in what form to increase management uptake.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grant projects, the Killer Whale Research and Conservation program has a list of metrics in Easygrants for applicants to choose from for future reporting (see below). For projects that are invited to submit a full proposal, we ask that you select the most relevant metrics from this list for your project. Most projects will have at least one metric that will apply but few will have more than two. If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Michelle Pico (pico@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance	# individuals reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities	Metric notes should clearly state the 'target audience' for which you are trying to train or change behavior through outreach and limit the value to just that audience (not anyone who might see a sign, etc.). Applicants need to build into their project SOW and budget how this metric will be measured (via surveys, etc.) for the target audience.
Volunteer Participation	# of volunteer hours	If your project is directly engaging volunteers please enter the # of volunteer hours and provide further information regarding any specific community sectors you may have targeted in the notes field.
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	# counties adopting BMPs	Metric value should ONLY INCLUDE BMPs called for in the *Puget Sound Partnership 2018-2022 Action Agenda* to reduce pollution in KW habitats and should track when a county has sustainably adopted a BMP county wide (not just a one-time pilot).

BMP implementation for storm water runoff	Acres with BMPs to reduce storm water runoff	Enter the number of acres with Best Management Practices (BMPs). If this is a BMP is NOT county-wide then capture it here but not above. If it IS county-wide then capture it in both places.
Fish passage improvements	# fish passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of barriers to Chinook salmon passage that have been removed or modified to allow fish passage.
Floodplain restoration	Acres restored	Metric value should ONLY INCLUDE restoration work called for in management plans to increase the recovery potential of specific salmon runs referenced. Work along a river bank should be captured here OR under Riparian restoration – **DO NOT DOUBLE COUNT**.
Riparian restoration	Miles restored	Metric value should ONLY INCLUDE restoration work called for in management plans to increase the recovery potential of specific salmon runs referenced. Work along a river bank should be captured here OR under Floodplain restoration – **DO NOT DOUBLE COUNT**.
Management or Governance Planning	# management plan activities being implemented	Metric value should ONLY INCLUDE 'listed actions' and priorities that the project will **complete** from any of the management or recovery planning documents referenced in the RFP. Please specifically list the plan and the action in the 'Notes'.
Research	# studies completed whose findings are reported to management	Metric value should ONLY INCLUDE research that is 1) is completed within the project period to a point where useful information is available for management decision making; and 2) will be disseminated to management in a way that **actively** facilitates uptake into the decision-making process (not just published in a journal). Targeted management office(s) should be identified in the notes field and **a letter from the office** on the proposed relevance of the work is encouraged.
Population	# of returning individuals	Metric should ONLY be used for projects targeting increased survivorship of Chinook salmon with full monitoring programs. Usually this will be hatchery based.
Captive breeding/ rearing/ rehab facilities	# individuals released	Metric should ONLY be used by hatchery programs to help calculate survivorship of Chinook salmon.

ELIGIBILITY

- **Eligible Entities:** Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state and federal government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Indian tribes, educational institutions, 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

The Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program anticipates awarding up to $1,500,000 in funding for grants this year. The majority of awards under this program will fall in the range of $50,000 to $500,000; however upper or lower limits to award size are not specified. A minimum of a 1:1 match of cash and/or in-kind services is required (federal and non-federal funds can apply as match to this program). Project period of performance may extend from one to three years. Selected projects may be required to submit data funded by this program to a public forum and/or present their results through NFWF-sponsored forums.

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 – Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the economically most efficient way to meet project objectives. Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of effective direct/indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget according to the type, size and duration of project and project objectives. Project budgets will be compared to similar projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

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.

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.

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 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 <u>not</u> 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.

Environmental Services – NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in, facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

Intellectual Property – Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF's website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to: habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions), environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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. 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.

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 [*Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program*].

Applicant Webinar	July 21, 2022 11:00AM PT / 2:00PM ET
Pre-Proposal Due Date	August 25, 2022 8:59PM PT / 11:59 PM ET
Invitations for Full Proposals Sent	August 31, 2022
Full Proposal Webinar	September 2, 2022 11:00AM PT / 2:00PM ET
Full Proposal Due Date	October 25, 2022 8:59PM PT / 11:59 PM ET
Review Period	October 31 – December 5, 2022
Awards Announced	March 2023

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:

Michelle Pico
pico@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.