

RESTORE COLORADO 2023 RFP



COLORADO
Department of
Natural Resources



GOCO
GREAT OUTDOORS COLORADO

**WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION**



NFWF

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, November 10th, 2022, by 9:59 PM Mountain Time**

Applicant Webinar ([Register Here](#)): Wednesday, September 7th, 2022, at 1:30 PM Mountain Time

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals for the annual Restoration and Stewardship of Outdoor Resources and Environment (RESTORE) Colorado Program. Grants made through the [RESTORE Colorado Program](#) will focus on the voluntary restoration, enhancement, and expansion of wildlife habitat throughout the state.

RESTORE Colorado is administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and represents a unique partnership between Great Outdoors Colorado, the Gates Family Foundation, the Walton Family Foundation, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Occidental, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

In 2023, approximately \$3.5 million may be available for projects focusing on the following habitats and statewide priorities:

- River corridors, riparian areas and wetlands

- Eastern Colorado grasslands
- Sagebrush rangelands
- Big game winter range and migration routes
- Forestland projects in specific geographies

The partners developed the program to accomplish wildlife habitat restoration, expansion, and improvement at-scale and provide opportunities for the proactive management of Colorado’s public and private conservation lands for the greatest benefit to wildlife and local communities. The concept of conservation at-scale refers to cross-jurisdictional projects that accomplish landscape-level benefits to habitat and wildlife. The RESTORE Colorado Program is especially interested in funding large-scale, cross-jurisdictional projects that consider ecological function over landownership and management. For example, a stream restoration project could incorporate upland forest pre- or post-wildland fire mitigation in order to accomplish watershed-level conservation or a project addressing big game migrations could cut across sagebrush, grassland and forest habitats to emphasize species benefits and ecological connectivity. Projects that address a single priority habitat will still be considered and may be competitive but are encouraged to emphasize cross-jurisdictional components.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must specifically address how projects will directly and measurably contribute to the landscape-scale accomplishment of one or more of the program priorities as identified below. The program seeks projects that develop and implement conservation practices directly on-the-ground and/or which increase organizational capacity to implement conservation activities. Preference will be given to at-scale projects that impact more than one priority habitat type and emphasize ecological connectivity and resilience.

All proposals should demonstrate direct and meaningful benefit to priority species. Priority species include those listed in Colorado State Wildlife Action Plans, federally listed species, NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife priority species, or other planning efforts names in the priority habitat section of the RFP.

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. 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.

Competitive projects may include but are not limited to:

River corridors, riparian areas and wetlands

- Enhancement and restoration of natural fluvial process that increase floodplain connectivity and recruitment of native riparian vegetation. Activities may include beaver mimicry

structures, livestock exclusion fencing and riparian vegetation planting. Activities can be in coordination with adjacent forest management activities, such as wildfire mitigation or post-fire recovery.

- Priority will be given to process-based wetland and riparian habitat restoration projects on the Western Slope within the broader Colorado River Basin.
- Grants may support increased capacity for conceptualizing, designing, and implementing process-based wetland and riparian restoration projects, including staff capacity and engineering design and analysis.
- Enhancement and restoration of hydrology and connectivity for native species including barrier removal.
- Enhancement and restoration of aquatic habitat for various life stages of native species.
- Projects which are part of a Stream Management Plan or Integrated Water Management Plan are strongly encouraged.

Eastern Colorado grasslands

- Enhancement and restoration of large intact tracts of eastern Colorado grasslands focusing on the habitat needs of migratory grassland birds, lesser prairie chicken and other species of greatest conservation need. Practices may include, but are not limited to:
 - Grassland restoration, improvement of range condition through a change in grazing or management practices;
 - Implementation of wildlife friendly grazing practices, including on expiring Conservation Reserve Program lands; and
 - Obstruction/tree removal to decrease grassland fragmentation.

Sagebrush shrublands

- Enhancement and restoration of sagebrush rangeland habitat in priority areas for conservation for the Greater and Gunnison Sage-grouse, sage sparrow, and sage thrasher. Projects may focus on one or more of the following practices:
 - Fence removal and modification;
 - Mesic meadow restoration such as installation of temporary wood grade structures or low impact restoration structures such as Zeedyk structures; and
 - Increasing forage quality and quantity (including management of invasive annual grasses and encroachment of woody species).

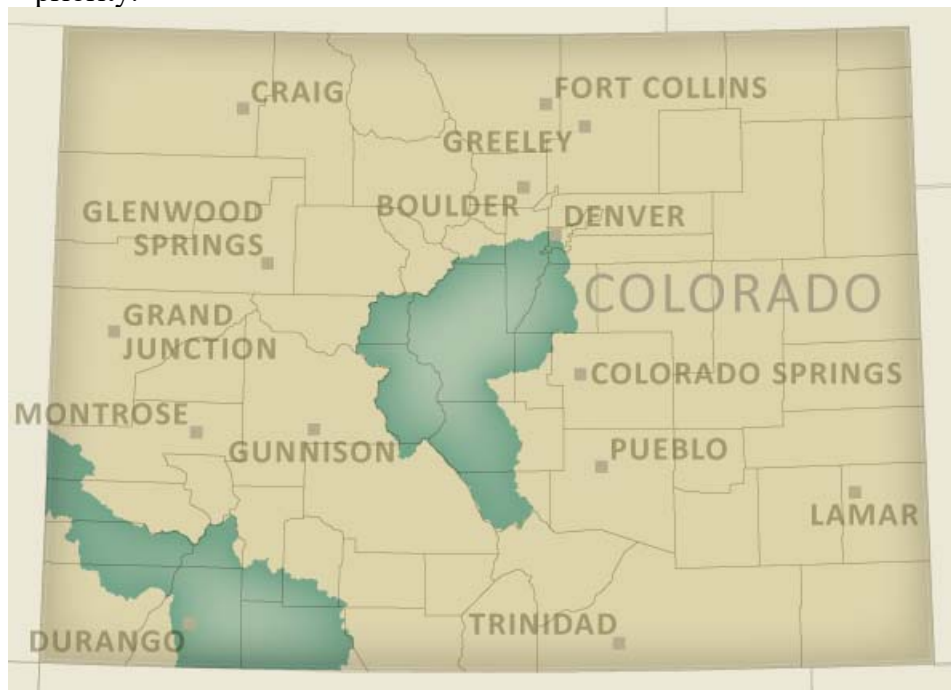
Big game winter range and migration corridors

- Improvement of winter range and/or priority migration corridors for elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep and moose. Projects that align with the [Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Big Game Action Plan](#) and fall within the boundaries of the [Colorado Habitat Partnership Program](#) will be most competitive but projects outside this scope will still be considered if there are significant wildlife benefits. Projects may focus on one or more of the following practices:
 - Fence removal and modification;
 - Transportation corridor enhancement; and

- Increasing forage quality and quantity (including management of invasive annual grasses and encroachment of woody species).
- Due to the nature of big game migration, proposals are expected to include ecological connectivity (between summer ranges, transitional ranges, and winter ranges) and cross-jurisdictional overlap with other priority habitat types.

Forest Habitats

- Forestry projects that have a direct nexus to watershed health and wildlife habitat improvement. For this grant round, funding priority will be given to projects with the highest species and ecological benefits. Projects that align with the priorities and strategies outlined in the [Rocky Mountain Restoration Initiative \(RMRI\)](#) will be most competitive. Within the RMRI, this round of funding has prioritized three focal watersheds: (1) the Upper Arkansas; (2) the Upper South Platte; or (3) select watersheds in Southwest Colorado (see map below). Project activities may include but are not limited to:
 - Habitat restoration practices specific to priority dry conifer forest types and aspen forest types. Dry conifer forests are defined as Piñon-Juniper, Ponderosa Pine, and Dry mix-conifer.
 - Restoration of both age class structure and to improve forest stand structure diversity habitat and restore that will help return to natural fire regimes.
 - Forestry projects should emphasize ecosystem resilience and direct species benefits for a species or suite of species of interest, including evaluation of the effectiveness of practices for species conservation.
 - Projects that focus on lodgepole pine or spruce/fir forest types will be given lesser priority.



Forest habitat priority watersheds. Please note that projects working on other program priorities are not limited to these watersheds.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

All projects must occur entirely within the state of Colorado. Individual program priorities may have geographic focus areas based upon the physical location of the resource.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the RESTORE Colorado program has a list of metrics for applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you cannot select an applicable metric, please contact Daley Burns (daley.burns@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
<i>River Corridors, Riparian Areas, and Wetlands</i>		
Water acquisitions or leases	Acre feet of water leased	Enter the acre feet of water leased
Fish passage improvements	# passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of fish passage barriers rectified
Fish passage improvements	Miles of stream opened	Enter the number of miles of stream opened
Restore stream geomorphology to increase aquatic species habitat	Miles restored	Enter number of instream miles restored to increase aquatic species habitat.
Remove invasive species that threaten target fish species	Miles restored	Enter the number of miles from which invasive species have been removed. If there is any overlap with the number of miles of instream aquatic habitat restored, please indicate the miles of overlap in the notes.
Reconnect floodplain and reestablish native riparian vegetation	Acres restored	Enter the number of riparian habitat acres restored, to include restoration of adjacent floodplain where restoration has reconnected floodplain riparian habitat with the river corridor and acres of reestablished native riparian vegetation. In the NOTES, indicate % of vegetation on the pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%) and the dominant vegetation being restored (Broadleaf, Conifer, Redwood, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp).
Installation of livestock exclusion fencing to protect riparian habitat	Miles of fencing installed	Enter miles of livestock exclusion fencing installed to improve and protect riparian habitat
Removal of wildlife unfriendly fencing	Miles of fencing removed	Enter the number of miles of fencing removed.

Installation of barriers to prevent the migration of invasive aquatic species	# barriers created	Enter the number of barriers created to prevent migration of non-native aquatic species. Specify species benefited and invasive species prevented in the notes section.
Conduct translocation projects for target native fish species	# translocations and/or social attraction projects	Enter the # translocations and/or reintroduction projects for native fish species
Wetland restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of wetland (NOT riparian or instream) acres 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%).
<i>Grassland/Sagebrush/Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors</i>		
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Mesic area restoration – # structures installed	Enter the # structures installed and specify structure type in the notes section (i.e., Zeedyk, beaver analogs or similar structures)
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Acres of mesic habitat with restored hydrology (private)	Enter the number of acres restored and restoration technique completed on private lands
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Acres of mesic habitat with restored hydrology (public)	Enter the number of acres restored and restoration technique completed on public lands
Habitat Improvement	# acres under management plan as a result of grant supported efforts (private)	Specify improvements in Notes section (i.e., grazing plan, infrastructure development etc.) completed on private lands
Habitat Improvement	# acres under management plan as a result of grant supported efforts (public)	Specify improvements in Notes section (i.e., grazing plan, infrastructure development etc.) completed on public lands
Habitat Restoration	Acres of grasslands restored on private land	Enter # acres of habitat restored on private land. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow, tidal marsh, swamp, seagrass, kelp forest).
Habitat Restoration	Acres of grasslands restored on public land	Enter # acres of habitat restored on public land. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow, tidal marsh, swamp, seagrass, kelp forest).
Habitat Restoration	Conifer forest - Acres restored on private land	Enter # acres of conifer forest habitat restored on private land. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration

		(barren, cropland, grass, shrub).
Habitat Restoration	Conifer forest - Acres restored on public land	Enter # acres of conifer forest habitat restored on public land. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub).
Habitat Restoration	Acres of annual invasive grasses managed	Enter # acres of invasives removed. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (junipers, shrubs, grasses/forbs), desired dominant vegetation (shrub, grass), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
Habitat Restoration	Acres of trees removed	Specify the number of acres of encroaching conifer removed
<i>Widely Applicable Metrics</i>		
Expand species monitoring to new and additional sites	# sites being monitored	Enter the number of sites being monitored
Volunteer participation	# volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers participating in projects

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c)3 organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies and other political subdivisions of the state, local and municipal governments, Indian tribes, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include businesses and unincorporated individuals.

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.
- Program funds will not be used for conservation easements or fee title acquisitions land.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY, LEVERAGE AND MATCH

The RESTORE Colorado program expects to award approximately \$3.5 million in 2023 to 12-16 projects, with a minimum grant amount of \$100,000. Due to the diversity of federal, state, and private funding sources involved in the RESTORE Colorado Program, leverage and match is encouraged but not required. Leverage and match will be evaluated for its demonstration of community support and project partnerships, not for the dollar amount contributed, and can include cash, in-kind or volunteer contributions. Leverage should be reported in the proposal narrative in Easygrants. Matching contributions should be included in the “Matching Contributions” section of the proposal task in Easygrants. Please reach out to the program managers, Daley Burns (daley.burns@nfwf.org) or Kirstin Neff (kirstin.neff@nfwf.org), and the [Applicant Tip Sheet](#) for additional guidance on how to report leverage and match in the proposal.

Leverage:

- Leverage does not need to follow the rules outlined below for matching contributions. Leverage is intended to demonstrate community support and project partnerships rather than commit a specific amount of funding to the project.
- Leverage does not need to be quantified with a dollar value if that is not applicable to the partnerships you wish to convey.

Match:

Non-federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee’s records
- Not included as contributions for any other Federal award
- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Committed directly to the project and used within the period of performance
- Allowable under OMB 2 CFR 200 Cost Principles

Federal Matching Contributions:

- Verifiable from the grantee’s records
- Reasonable and necessary for accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Committed directly to the project and used within the period of performance

GRANT TIMELINES

A grant term shall not exceed three years in length. Funding priority will be given to projects that will demonstrate significant accomplishments within the first year.

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 as identified in the RESTORE Colorado RFP, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the Request for Proposal (including NFWF’s [Rocky Mountain Rangelands](#) and [Southwest Rivers](#) Business Plans).

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.

Transferability – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other landscapes and communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

Communication – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

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

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

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. Projects awarded under the priority for process-based wetland and riparian restoration in the Colorado River Basin will be required to implement a pre-determined monitoring protocol for such projects that will be provided by NFWF. Applicants should plan to provide project access to a monitoring contractor supported by NFWF to allow execution of the monitoring protocol for their project.

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. Projects in the River Corridors, Riparian Areas and Wetlands category will be evaluated with respect to their potential to maintain themselves or minimize need for maintenance.

Past Success – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

Partnership – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

Key Personnel – Please include a brief description of all proposed project personnel and qualifications.

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.

Due to the diversity of federal, state and private funding sources involved in the RESTORE Colorado Program, the partners are able to waive matching fund requirements for applicants. It is very important that other funding sources, both cash and in-kind, that are a part of the proposed applications are listed to help demonstrate community support and the full scope of the project.

Matching Contributions and Leverage – Matching Contributions and Leverage (encouraged but not required) consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance.

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.

Quality Assurance – If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit [quality assurance documentation](#). Applicants should budget time and resources to complete this task.

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 [NFWF RESTORE Colorado](#) page for the most current dates and information.

Applicant Webinar	Wednesday, September 7 th , 2022, 1:30 PM Mountain Time
Full Proposal Due Date	Thursday, November 10 th , 2022, 9:59 PM Mountain Time
Review Period	November 2022 – February 2023
Awards Announced	March 2023

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through NFWF’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.
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 PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded [here](#).

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](#)” webpage.

There is a pre-recorded webinar available [here](#) which provides in-depth instructions on how to navigate Easygrants and submit an application online. Please also join our applicant webinar on September 7th to learn more about the programmatic components of this funding opportunity and to ask questions of NFWF staff.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

Riparian and Forest Project Inquiries:

Kirstin Neff, Southwest Rivers Program Manager, Kirstin.Neff@nfwf.org

Sagebrush, Grassland and Migration Project Inquiries:

Daley Burns, Manager, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, Daley.Burns@nfwf.org

General Inquiries:

Isabel Comella, Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinator, Isabel.Comella@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.