



Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund

2023 Request For Proposals

Applicant Webinar ([Register Here](#)): **Thursday, December 8, 2022, at 10:30 AM Eastern Time**
Full Proposal Due Date: **Tuesday, February 2, 2023, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to restore, enhance and conserve longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood forests within the historical longleaf pine range. The Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund is a funding opportunity for on-the-ground conservation projects. It represents a public-private partnership supported with Federal funding from USDA's Forest Service (USFS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and private funding from International Paper's Forestland Stewards Partnership, Southern Company and Altria Group. Approximately \$16.9 million in grant funds is expected to be available in 2023. Grant awards are expected to range from \$250,000 to \$3,000,000.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

To be eligible for funding, projects must occur within the historical longleaf pine range. Preference will be given to projects located within local implementation team boundaries as outlined in NFWF's [Business Plan: Longleaf Forests and Rivers](#). Focal areas are aligned with longleaf local implementation team (LIT) boundaries that are typically centered on significant geographic areas (SGAs) as defined in the [America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine](#). These SGAs are core longleaf restoration areas, typically anchored by significant public lands, such as national forests, state forests, or military installations, where longleaf pine currently exists and around which coordinated efforts are being developed to further at-risk species recovery and restore, enhance, protect, and connect longleaf pine on an ecosystem level. A PDF map of the historical longleaf pine range and NFWF focal areas can be [viewed here](#). An interactive map can be viewed here: [Interactive Map](#).

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Proposals should demonstrate how project strategies will advance specific longleaf pine and/or bottomland hardwood habitat and species goals and objectives outlined in the following guiding documents:

- [Business Plan: Longleaf Forests and Rivers](#) which outlines NFWF's strategic priorities and goals to restore and enhance longleaf pine forest ecosystems. Four species are targeted within the business plan: red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow, and northern bobwhite. These four species were selected as indicators of healthy longleaf ecosystems and represent the habitat needs of a broader suite of species dependent upon this system.
- [America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative's \(ALRI\) Range-Wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine](#), which outlines strategic restoration goals for longleaf pine ecosystem restoration and enhancement on public and private lands through collaborative, on-the-ground actions. Applicants are encouraged to also review ALRI's three-year [strategic priorities and actions](#) document.

In pursuit of habitat and species restoration goals, applicants are encouraged to prioritize projects that also address co-benefits and engage local communities and historically underserved landowners as outlined below:

- **Conservation Co-Benefits:** Projects that will implement habitat restoration or improvement practices that benefit wildlife while also sequestering carbon and/or protecting and improving water quantity or

quality are encouraged. Note, there is strong funder interest in tree planting projects this year and NFWF seeks proposals that will help expand and accelerate tree plantings. 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 benefits associated with any given project. These calculations will not be used to generate carbon credits, but rather for narrative and demonstration, such as communicating to partners and their supply chain networks about the potential carbon value and other co-benefits 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 project design, implementation and management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes, something particularly important when working with tribes, to ensure traditional ecological knowledge elevation. Examples of community-level partners include municipalities, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, community leaders, tribes, and private landowners.

Projects that specifically seek to engage minority, historically underserved and unserved landowners, as well as minority professionals in the field of forestry and longleaf restoration, are encouraged to review the ALRI's [Longleaf for All Initiative](#) and [barriers and recommendations document](#) for potential strategies to help address these challenges.

Funding Strategies: Projects should seek to implement one or more of the following strategies to address program priorities and restore or improve longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood habitats and populations of at-risk, listed and other wildlife species, with preference given to projects that benefit the following focal species: red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow, and/or northern bobwhite.

1. Establishing Longleaf Pine and/or Bottomland Hardwood Forests: With the historic increase in program funding available this year, significant focus is being placed on tree planting. NFWF encourages projects that will expand and accelerate tree planting and address barriers to scaling up longleaf planting. This includes projects that create new longleaf pine and/or bottomland hardwood forest habitat, including site preparation and planting on public and private lands. Projects 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 promote long-term sustainability and maintenance of plantings (e.g., mechanical and/or chemical treatments, prescribed burning, etc.).

- **Address Barriers to Scaling-Up of Longleaf Planting:** Strategies that address barriers to scaling up longleaf pine planting will be considered, including but not limited to seed collection, processing, and storage; seedling propagation, improvement, and production; planting workforce development; and monitoring planting survival and growth. Projects that both address barriers and complete tree planting during the project period of performance are preferred.

2. Enhancing and Maintaining Existing Longleaf Pine and/or Bottomland Hardwood Ecosystems: Includes projects that maintain, expand and promote effective management of existing longleaf pine and/or bottomland hardwood forest habitats on public and private lands through the use of management treatments to benefit wildlife, including, but not limited to the following:

For Longleaf Pine:

- **Prescribed Burning:** Strategies and activities that increase implementation of prescribed fire on private and public lands, including, but not limited to, implementation and technical assistance

capacity, coordination and collaboration through fire teams, prescribed burn associations, and/or other strategies.

- **Other Silvicultural Treatments:** Implement treatments to improve longleaf forest conditions to benefit wildlife, forest health and resilience and improve carbon sequestration, such as overstory thinning, mechanical or chemical treatments to remove invasive species, hardwoods, and other competing pine species, and planting native under-story plant species to improve wildlife habitat.

For Bottomland Hardwood Forests:

- Implement strategies and activities that promote regeneration of natural stands and/or improved management of existing natural or planted stands through invasive species control, thinning and other treatments that enhance wildlife value. Additional inter-planting as needed to improve tree species composition and conditions for wildlife.

- 3. Expanding and Coordinating Technical Assistance and Outreach:** Includes projects that implement collaborative and strategic outreach and technical assistance to increase the amount of private landowners and/or producers engaged in longleaf pine and/or bottomland hardwood restoration and stewardship practices. Proposals must estimate the number of acres to be restored, enhanced, or maintained because of proposed outreach and technical assistance 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](#), [NRCS's Longleaf Pine Initiative](#), [USDA's Working Lands for Wildlife](#), and/or [DOD Sentinel Landscapes](#). NFWF also seeks projects that include outreach and technical assistance to, and enhanced participation of historically underserved landowners, including landowners and/or producers that identify as one or more of the federal underserved and/or special emphasis categories.

- **Increase outreach and technical assistance delivery success:** Strategies may include:
 - Increasing capacity through the hiring of staff or contractors to provide technical assistance to private landowners, develop forest management and prescribed burn plans, and assist with implementation of forest restoration and management treatments.
 - Implementing innovative methods to engage private landowners or producers and expand on-the-ground forest restoration, management and protection activities on private lands.
 - Targeting outreach for private landowners and producers and working with NRCS, FWS and other partners to prioritize, plan and deliver financial assistance to improve habitat and support at-risk species.
- **Address Barriers to Landowner Participation:** Projects that address landowner barriers to participation in forestry and conservation programs, including historically underserved landowners and/or landowners that have not previously participated in programs are encouraged. Preference will be given to projects that include implementation of restoration or management practices. Applicants are encouraged to review the [Longleaf for All Barriers and Recommendations document](#) for potential strategies to help address these challenges.
- **Advance new market-oriented and/or incentive programs:** Pilot innovative, market-oriented solutions and/or incentive programs that stimulate landowner participation in longleaf restoration efforts.
- **Increase participation in third-party forest certification:** Increase participation in third-party forest certification programs to encourage third-party verification of sustainable forest management practices for longleaf pine ecosystem, bottomland hardwood forests, and associated wildlife.

- 4. Building and Improving Local Implementation Team Capacity:** A portion of available grant funding may be allocated to support a local implementation team (LIT) coordinator position to provide coordination across all significant geographic area (SGA) partners, priorities and activities, and accelerate achievement of longleaf restoration and maintenance goals for the defined region. Applicants should limit requests to **no more than 50% of the LIT coordinator's salary and benefits**. Applicants that are not able to cover the remainder of the LIT coordinator's salary and benefits must contact NFWF to discuss a waiver to the 50% threshold prior to submitting a proposal. Funding for LIT coordinators is currently limited to those LITs working within an SGA.

Proposed capacity-building activities must be integrated as part of a larger project addressing one or more of strategies 1-3 above. Proposals must detail how LIT capacity investments will lead to specific, measurable, on-the-ground conservation outcomes within the project period.

- 5. Accelerating Species Recovery and Response Monitoring:** Limited funding is available to support translocation, installation of nest-cavity inserts, captive rearing/headstarting and reintroduction, and/or other species-specific restoration and management activities to aid recovery of longleaf ecosystem-dependent species. Preference will be given to projects that contribute to the species outcomes outlined in the [Business Plan: Longleaf Forests and Rivers](#) for red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow, and northern bobwhite, and that are located within a business plan focal area. Habitat restoration and species-specific strategies that aid in the recovery of populations of other forest-dependent wildlife species that are indicators of healthy forest ecosystems including, but not limited to swallow-tailed kite, red-headed woodpecker, brown-headed nuthatch, eastern indigo snake, wild turkey, and flatwoods salamander (spp.) will also be considered.

Proposals requesting funds to monitor species response to habitat restoration and management treatments and/or species-specific activities will be considered. NFWF is especially interested in monitoring species response to prescribed burning within the longleaf pine ecosystem, including, but not limited to Bachman's sparrow. Where baseline data is not available, monitoring proposals should establish a baseline measurement. This baseline should then be used to measure change over time as restoration activities are undertaken. Preference will be given to monitoring proposals that include habitat restoration and/or enhancement implementation or monitor species response to habitat restoration and/or enhancement projects funded through another NFWF Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund grant. Proposals should demonstrate how activities advance implementation of established conservation strategies within federal species recovery plans, regional bird conservation plans and/or state wildlife action plans. Applicants must contact Jon Scott (jonathan.scott@nfwf.org) prior to applying for species-specific strategies and/or monitoring to discuss the project's geographic location and proposed activities.

- 6. Conservation Easements:** Funding is available to facilitate targeted conservation easement projects that protect existing, high-quality longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood habitat or key sites targeted for longleaf and bottomland hardwood restoration that are part of a broader restoration proposal.

Requests for conservation easement funding should be limited to transaction and due-diligence costs, such as boundary survey, appraisal, environmental report, etc. In limited instances, highly leveraged projects will be considered for acquisition costs. Please contact Jon Scott (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 Longleaf Landscape 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) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Projects that may involve organizations, landowners 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
Establishing Longleaf Pine and/or Bottomland Hardwood Forests	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on private lands through plantings	Enter the total acres of longleaf pine established through plantings on private lands. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on public lands through plantings	Enter the total acres of longleaf pine established through plantings on public lands. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on private lands	Enter the total number of longleaf pine seedlings planted on private lands. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout the number of trees by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), density per acre, and mortality rate.
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on public lands	Enter the total number of longleaf pine seedlings planted on public lands. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout the number of trees by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), density per acre, and mortality rate.
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Land restoration - Acres restored on private land	Enter # acres of bottomland hardwood forest established through plantings on private lands. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf).
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Land restoration - Acres restored on public land	Enter # acres of bottomland hardwood forest established through plantings on public lands. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf).
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Land restoration - # of trees planted on private lands	Enter the number of bottomland hardwood seedlings that will be planted on private lands. For projects that include planting in multiple states, please break out the number of seedlings by state (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), forest type planted (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf), density per acre, and mortality rate.
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Land restoration - # of trees planted on public lands	Enter the number of bottomland hardwood seedlings that will be planted on public lands. For projects that include planting in multiple states, please break out the number of seedlings by state (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting

		(barren, cropland, grass, shrub), forest type planted (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf), density per acre, and mortality rate.
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Seed harvesting - lbs harvested	Enter the number of pounds of longleaf seeds collected.
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Plant cultivation - # seedlings propagated	Enter the number of longleaf pine seedlings propagated.
Enhancing and Maintaining Existing Longleaf Pine and/or Bottomland Hardwood Ecosystems	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on private lands through silvicultural manipulation	Enter # acres of existing forest restored to a longleaf dominant condition (>50% longleaf overstory) through silvicultural manipulation (example: thinning/removal of other tree species to make longleaf the dominant overstory species) on private lands. In the notes, indicate the proportion of biomass being removed. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on public lands through silvicultural manipulation	Enter # acres of existing forest restored to a longleaf dominant condition (>50% longleaf overstory) through silvicultural manipulation (example: thinning/removal of other tree species to make longleaf the dominant overstory species) on public lands. In the notes, indicate the proportion of biomass being removed. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - BMP implementation for prescribed burns - Acres private land burned	Enter # acres with prescribed burning on longleaf pine habitat on private lands. Site prep burning is included in this metric. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify average frequency (in yrs) for future burning, dominant vegetation burned (forest, shrubland, grassland, cropland, Phragmites marsh). If forest, note if trees were planted in past 10 yrs (Yes/No) & type of forest (Longleaf-slash pine, Longleaf-slash pine with high productivity and management intensity, Loblolly-shortleaf pine, Loblolly-shortleaf pine with high productivity and management intensity, Mixed conifer).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - BMP implementation for prescribed burns - Acres public land burned	Enter # acres with prescribed burning on longleaf pine habitat on public lands. Site prep burning is included in this metric. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify average frequency (in yrs) for future burning, dominant vegetation burned (forest, shrubland, grassland, cropland, Phragmites marsh). If forest, note if trees were planted in past 10 yrs (Yes/No) & type of forest (Longleaf-slash pine, Longleaf-slash pine with high productivity and management intensity, Loblolly-shortleaf pine, Loblolly-shortleaf pine with high productivity and management intensity, Mixed conifer).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (private)	Enter the number of acres of over-story treated, mid-story treated, and/or native understory established that will be completed within existing longleaf pine habitat on private lands. Acres of prescribed fire and acres of invasive species treated should not be included in this total. Please report acres of prescribed fire and invasive species treated using the specific metrics for these activities. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Improved management	Enter the number of acres of over-story treated, mid-story treated, and/or native understory established that will be completed within existing longleaf pine habitat on public lands. Acres of prescribed fire

	practices - Acres under imp mgt (public)	and acres of invasive species treated should not be included in this total. Please report acres of prescribed fire and invasive species treated using the specific metrics for these activities. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	LLSF – Longleaf Pine – Removal of invasives – Acres restored on private lands	Enter # acres of invasives removed from within longleaf pine stands on private lands. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Forest understory, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
	LLSF – Longleaf Pine – Removal of invasives – Acres restored on public lands	Enter # acres of invasives removed from within longleaf pine stands on public lands. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Forest understory, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (private)	Enter the number of acres that will be treated to improve or maintain existing bottomland hardwood forest on private lands. Acres of invasive species treated should not be included in this total. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (public)	Enter the number of acres that will be treated to improve or maintain existing bottomland hardwood forest on public lands. Acres of invasive species treated should not be included in this total. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	LLSF – Bottomland Hardwoods – Removal of invasives – Acres restored on private lands	Enter # acres of invasives removed from within bottomland hardwood stands on private lands. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Forest understory, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), desired dominant vegetation (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
	LLSF – Bottomland Hardwoods – Removal of invasives – Acres restored on public lands	Enter # acres of invasives removed from within bottomland hardwood stands on public lands. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Forest understory, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), desired dominant vegetation (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
Expanding and Coordinating Private Landowner Technical Assistance and Outreach	Note: Projects that will engage private landowners and/or producers should select all three of the following metrics:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # people targeted • # people reached • # people with changed behavior 	
	Data for all three metrics will enable NFWF to better understand landowner/producer response to outreach, education and technical assistance efforts.	
	LLSF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people targeted	Enter the number of landowners that will be targeted by outreach activities. Examples include direct mailings and targeted media advertisements. Please only include landowners in this metric.
	LLSF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical	Enter the number of landowners 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”

	Assistance - # people reached	metric. If the target value includes landowners 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. Please only include landowners in this metric.
	LLSF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people with changed behavior	Enter the number of private landowners 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. Please only include landowners in this metric.
	LLSF - BMP development - # mgmt plans with BMPs	Enter the number of forest plans (restoration, management, and/or stewardship) that will be developed.
	LLSF - Incentives - # participants receiving government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the number of participants receiving government cost share or financial assistance. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP, CSP, etc.).
	LLSF – Incentives - Dollar value of government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the dollar value of government agency cost share or financial assistance. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP, CSP, etc.).
	LLSF – Incentives - Acres covered by government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the number of participants enrolled in government cost share or financial assistance programs. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP, CSP, etc.).
	LLSF – Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people demonstrating a minimum level of knowledge, attitudes, or skills	Enter the number of citizens engaged in education and outreach activities (example: number of individuals that attended a Fire Festival). This number may also include the number of landowners engaged through technical assistance and outreach.
Accelerating Species Recovery	LLSF - Red-cockaded Woodpecker - Translocation - # translocated/stocked	Enter the number of pairs of red-cockaded woodpeckers that will be translocated.
	LLSF - Gopher Tortoise - Translocation - # translocated/stocked	Enter the number of individual gopher tortoises that will be translocated and/or released.
Conservation Easements	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Conservation easements - Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of longleaf pine habitat 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).
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Conservation easements - Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of bottomland hardwood 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).

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 Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund anticipates awarding approximately \$16.9 million in grants in 2023. Grant awards are expected to range from \$250,000 to \$3,000,000. Applicants considering proposals requesting a funding amount above or below this funding range are encouraged to contact NFWF prior to submitting. This program has one annual application cycle and awards approximately 20-25 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: With the availability of federal and private funding sources, there is flexibility and therefore match is encouraged, but not required. However, projects that include non-federal cash or in-kind¹ match and/or federal leverage are encouraged and will be more competitive. Please reach out to NFWF program staff, Jon Scott (jonathan.scott@nfwf.org) or Zack Bernstein (zachary.bernstein@nfwf.org), and review the Applicant Tip Sheet for additional guidance on how to report match and leverage in the proposal.

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 program and funder priorities and the following criteria.

¹ Note that landowner contributions being used as match for a Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund grant must be outside of the amount already written into any agency financial assistance contract as a cost-share contribution.

Program Goals and Priorities – Project contributes to the Fund’s habitat and species goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics that will be tracked and measured to evaluate project success. In addition to meeting key habitat needs for longleaf ecosystem indicator species (red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Bachman’s sparrow, northern bobwhite quail), describe any significant benefits to other at-risk, threatened or endangered species, or even game species. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the request for proposals.

Conservation Plan and Context – Describe how the project addresses the priorities and goals outlined in:

- the [Business Plan: Longleaf Forests and Rivers](#) and other existing conservation plans or strategies that benefits the longleaf pine ecosystem and associated species.
- Proposals submitted on behalf of a longleaf LIT/SGA should describe how the project will support and advance the priorities identified in a LIT/SGA conservation plan.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding. Applicants with active Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund grants that overlap with the period of performance of the proposed project should describe why additional funds are needed, and how the proposed project will complement and expand upon previously funded project(s).

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 – 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.

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 and/or Acknowledgement of Coordination:

- Letter(s) from the applicable State Forestry office(s), highlighting how the proposed project is being coordinated with their office must be submitted for projects including work on state and private lands ([View state forest agency contacts](#)).
- Letter of support from the appropriate military installation/base Commander, or official designee that addresses the specific project benefits to the military mission are required for projects involving or benefitting a local military installation or base.
- Letter of support from the Forest Supervisor of the applicable National Forest is required for projects that include work on a National Forest ([View National Forest contacts](#)).
- Letter(s) from the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist(s) acknowledging how the proposed project is being coordinated with their office are recommended for projects including 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 [Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program](#) priorities are recommended.

- Projects that geographically overlap with a local implementation team (LIT) but are not submitted on behalf of the LIT partnership, must provide an acknowledgement letter from the LIT(s) outlining how the project will coordinate with the LIT partners and complement or enhance existing/planned LIT/SGA activities ([View contact information for LITs](#)).
- Letters documenting the support/contributions of other project partners are 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 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.

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.

Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories – The Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund encourages projects that engage organizations, landowners and producers in one or more of the USDA’s Underserved and Special Emphasis categories. Historically Underserved 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 on the Historically Underserved categories can be [found here](#). The Special Emphasis categories are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Black, Disability, Women, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Hispanic, and Veterans.

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. 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.

Special Instructions: Explanation of how Project Supports DoD Mission Objectives – For applicants whose project includes work on, adjacent to, or within close proximity of military bases or installations, applications must demonstrate how proposed projects will support DoD’s mission objectives and complete the DOD questionnaire provided as an upload in Easygrants.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information on the *Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund*.

Applicant Webinar [Register Here]	December 8, 2022, 10:30- 11:30 AM, Eastern Time
Full Proposal Due Date	February 2, 2023, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Review Period	February 2023-April 2023
Awards Announced	May 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:

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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.