



## Refugio Beach Oil Spill – Gaviota Coast Abalone Restoration

### 2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **March 1, 2023 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

#### OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is soliciting proposals to provide compensatory restoration for injury to subtidal habitats caused by the Refugio Beach Oil Spill (RBOS). Specifically, the aim of this funding is to restore depleted populations of abalone to two reef areas within two State Marine Conservations areas (SMCAs) that were directly affected by the oil spill (Naples and Campus Point SCMA). As a principal grazer, abalone play an important role in structuring kelp forest habitats. Restoring abalone to these reserves will serve to restore ecosystem function and increase resiliency to future impacts.

An estimated \$500,000 will be available through this solicitation for a Phase 1 project award, which is anticipated to last 1–2 years. Award will be contingent upon available funding from the NOAA. NFWF may decide to extend the award for additional phases in the future. Future phases may be awarded in 2–3 year increments according to negotiated award amounts. Cumulatively, all phases of the project may be up to 10 years in duration (5 years of active restoration and 5 years of post-restoration monitoring),

NFWF and NOAA anticipate selecting only one project and encourage collaboration and partnerships. In a multi-partner application, the primary applicant would be considered the formal recipient, which would be responsible for oversight and coordination with the other partners (e.g., via subawards or subcontracts consistent with their organization’s policies).

*Background:* On May 19, 2015, a pipeline owned and operated by Plains All American Pipeline ruptured near Refugio State Beach. Over 100,000 gallons of crude oil were spilled, much of which ran down a storm drain and into a ravine under the freeway, entering the ocean. The [Restoration Plan](#) outlined restoration projects intended to compensate the public for injuries to several habitats and other natural resources including subtidal rocky reef and kelp forest habitats.

As described in the Restoration Plan, the goal of this compensatory project is to create a self-sustaining population of red abalone at Naples and Isla Vista reefs by outplanting juvenile abalone and/or translocating adult abalone from other wild populations. Projects will support implementation of abalone restoration activities within the Naples Reef and Campus Point SMCAs including but not limited to: captive propagation of red abalone, collection of wild red abalone from donor sites, identifying suitable outplanting sites, outplanting abalone, and collecting metrics of outplanting success. While this project targets red abalone, NFWF and NOAA will consider proposals that include pink or endangered white abalone along with red abalone as part of the restoration.

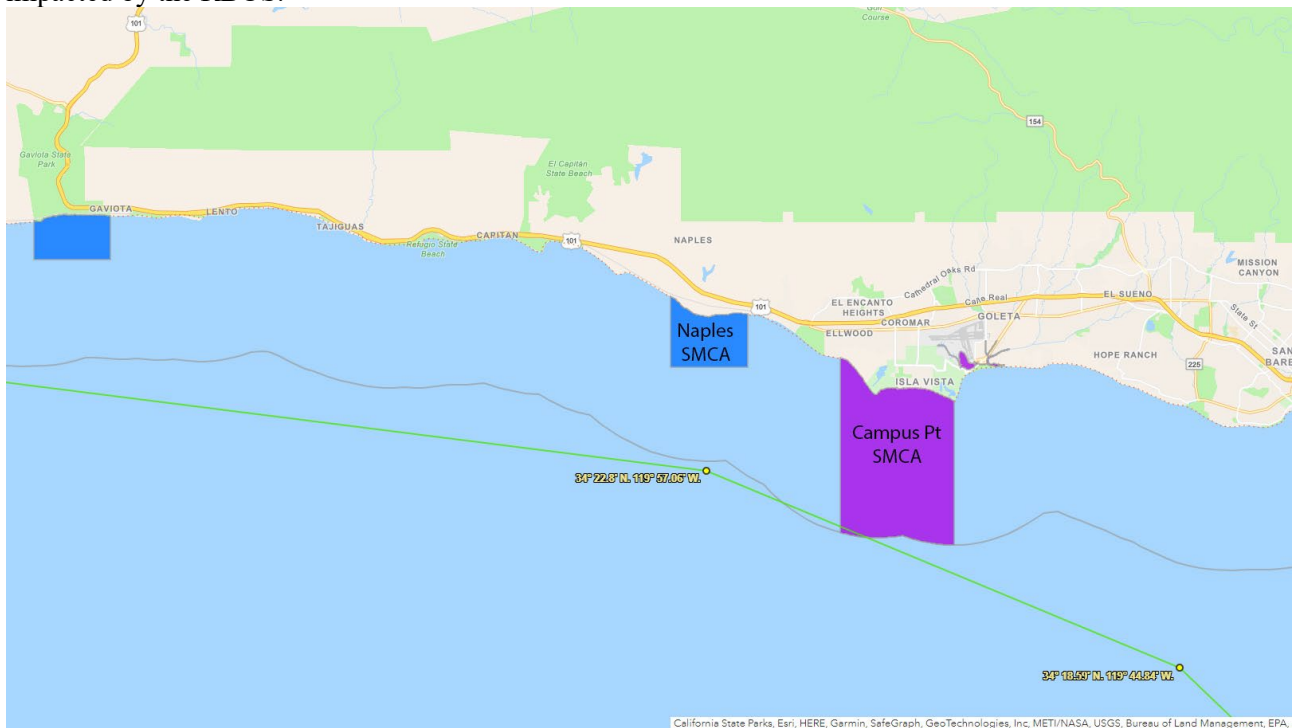
*Project Proposals:* Although only Phase 1 will be awarded at this time, project proposals should describe proposed phasing of the full project, and provide a work plan, timeline and budget for each of the proposed phases of the full project. In the Budget section of Easygrants, applicants should only include the proposed

budget for Phase 1. Applicants should include proposed budgets for future phases in the proposal narrative document in the Uploads section of Easygrants.

- Work Plan – Description of activities with details on how they will be conducted. Describe tasks, deliverables, and outcomes.
- Project timeline outlining major activities, milestones, and reports
- Environmental compliance information, such as a list of federal, Tribal, state, and local permits required for projects under this award

## GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Naples Reef (Naples SMCA) and Isla Vista Reef (Campus Point SMCA) were identified in the Restoration Plan as sites for abalone restoration. Other sites may be considered as long as they are within the area impacted by the RBOS.



View of the Gaviota Coast showing the Naples and Campus Point SCMA's.

## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Coordination with local resource agencies:

Applications under this funding opportunity will work directly with local resource agencies, e.g.

NOAA and State of California, to implement projects that will address the priorities listed below for reefs associated with the Restoration Plan.

Abalone restoration:

Project will create a partnership with appropriate collaborators that will work together to accomplish the project goals. These partners will be selected to contribute to the program priorities listed below.

#### Captive production of juvenile red abalone:

Project will use accepted aquaculture techniques to produce up to 20,000 juvenile red abalone (~25-35mm) per year. The initial phase is only for 1–2 years, with abalone restoration efforts potentially continuing for a total of five years. Activities may include but are not limited to establishing partnerships with local abalone farms, training in propagation techniques, establishing new nurseries, and techniques to scale-up production.

#### Collection of wild abalone from donor populations:

Project will work collaboratively with NOAA, The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and other partners to determine if appropriate donor sites exist. If sites are identified, up to 900 wild adult abalone will be collected for abalone translocation efforts. The final number may be less, depending on the size and geographic extent of the donor population.

#### Prepping abalone for out-planting:

Project will use accepted methods for tagging both juvenile and field-collected abalone prior to outplanting, establishing a protocol for confirming the health and condition of the abalone prior to outplanting that conforms to all State and Federal regulations, and packing abalone in appropriate containers to be transferred to field sites for outplanting.

#### Abalone outplanting:

Project will focus on identifying appropriate outplant sites within the Naples and Campus Point SMCAs, identify appropriate outplant modules for juvenile abalone, deploy modules at outplant sites, and deploy up to 5000 abalone, distributed among the outplant sites, up to four times a year. The initial phase will be for 1–2 years, with outplanting potentially continuing for a total of five years. If translocation is deemed feasible based on the availability of an appropriate donor population, project will also identify appropriate methods for deploying wild-collected abalone to outplant sites and deploy up to 900 wild adult abalone, per year for two years. Translocation could happen as multiple events each year or in a single event each year.

#### Outplant monitoring:

Applicants should address how they will monitor for short term and long-term success of the project. Monitoring will comply with the monitoring requirements identified by the State of California's abalone stocking permits. Metrics for progress reports will include: # of juvenile abalone outplanted to restoration sites, # of adult wild abalone collected for translocation, # of outplants, species and size class of outplants (both juvenile and adult translocations), # of and species of shells collected at outplant sites, survivability of outplants at 6 and 12 months, and # of acres restored (reef).

#### Community impact and engagement:

Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes ensuring

traditional knowledge elevation. Additionally, projects should engage community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) to help design, implement, and maintain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, we ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	
Abalone Restoration and outplanting	Abalone - Marine habitat restoration - # of adult wild abalone collected for translocation	# of adult wild abalone collected for translocation
	Abalone - Marine habitat restoration - # of juvenile abalone outplanted to restoration sites	# of juvenile abalone outplanted to restoration sites
	Abalone – Outplants	# of outplants, species and size class of outplants (both juvenile and adult translocations)
		# of and species of shells collected at outplant sites, survivability of outplants at 6 and 12 months
	Rocky Reef/Kelp Forest - Marine habitat restoration - # acres restored (reef)	# acres restored (reef)
	Engagement – # of contributing organizations	# of organizations contributing to the initiative's conservation goals

## ELIGIBILITY

## **Eligible and Ineligible Entities**

Eligible applicants include *non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, for-profit organizations, Tribal governments and organizations, educational institutions, international organizations.*

Ineligible applicants include *U.S. federal government agencies, and unincorporated individuals.*

## **Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds**

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

## **FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH**

The Phase I project award will not exceed \$500,000 and must end no later than December 31, 2026. Future phases may be awarded in 2–3-year increments according to negotiated award amounts. Cumulatively, all phases of the project may be up to 10 years in duration (5 years of active restoration and 5 years of post-restoration monitoring), with total available funds of approximately \$3,880,000. Matching funds are not required.

## **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.

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

**Cost-Effectiveness** – Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs in the proposed budget. The federal government has determined that a *de minimis* 10 percent indirect rate is an acceptable minimum for organizations without a NICRA, as such NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize **ALL** proposals with indirect rates above 10 percent for cost-effectiveness.

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

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

**Monitoring** – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

**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.)

## **OTHER**

**Budget** – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF’s [Budget Instructions](#) cost categories. Federally funded projects must be in compliance with [OMB Uniform Guidance](#) as applicable.

**Matching Contributions** – Match is encouraged but not required. 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.

**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. Award recipients will also be required to acknowledge NOAA in press releases, publications and other public communications.

**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.

**Data Sharing** - Successful applicants will be required to satisfy NOAA data sharing requirements, including making environmental data collected or created under this award publicly visible and accessible in a timely manner.

**Reporting** – Successful applicants will be required to submit semi-annual progress reports based on reporting templates that will be provided.

**Project Safety** – Successful applicants will be required have a written safety plan for management of the project, which should specifically address safety of project personnel, associates, visitors, and volunteers; and should address SCUBA-related activities, in particular.

## **TIMELINE**

Dates of activities are subject to change.

Full Proposal Due Date	<b>March 1, 2023 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time</b>
Review Period	March 2023
Awards Announced	April 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](https://easygrants.nfwf.org) to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on your homepage, click the “Apply for Funding” button and select this RFP’s “Funding Opportunity” from the list of options.
3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

## **APPLICATION ASSISTANCE**

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded [here](#).

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website’s [Applicant Information](#) page.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:  
Margette Bourne, Manager for Federal Relations at [Margette.Bourne@nfwf.org](mailto:Margette.Bourne@nfwf.org)

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



Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: [Easygrants@nfwf.org](mailto:Easygrants@nfwf.org)

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

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

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