



## **BATS FOR THE FUTURE FUND**

### **2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, April 27, 2023 by 11:59 PM Eastern**

#### **OVERVIEW**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), is soliciting proposals to take action to slow or halt the impacts of white-nose syndrome disease (WNS) in North America and promote the survival and recovery of WNS-affected bat populations and species. The Bats for the Future Fund (BFF) will award an estimated \$1 million in grants in 2023. The USFWS, which leads the national response for combatting WNS, provides significant contributions for the BFF. Additional important funding is provided by Avangrid Foundation, NextEra Energy Resources, through its charitable arm, the NextEra Energy Foundation, and Southern Company.

The objectives of the BFF are to:

- Advance treatments and management tools that provide the greatest potential to improve bat survival by preventing exposure to *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* (*Pd*), the fungal pathogen that causes WNS, and/or enhancing bats' ability to withstand the disease.
- Implement treatments, management tools, and habitat conservation strategies that help WNS-affected bat populations to recover from the impacts of WNS; and,
- Support innovative and collaborative research leading directly to development and deployment of treatments and management tools or strategies for WNS that will perpetuate viable populations of bats.

#### **EPIDEMIOLOGICAL FOCUS**

The Bats for the Future Fund will award grants to projects that develop and deploy field treatments, management tools and conservation strategies for bat populations that are currently impacted or may be impacted in the future. Actions should be tailored to the disease status, species and habitat(s) in which they are proposed to be used. Project objectives should vary depending on epidemiological focus of the proposed work as it relates to the status of *Pd* and WNS in project areas.

- **In areas where *Pd* has not been detected** and is unlikely to already be present, tools and strategies that counter the invasion and establishment of pathogenic *Pd* are sought to avoid or stall impacts of WNS on vulnerable bat species. Strategies that will bolster the resilience of bats likely to be exposed to *Pd* in these areas are also eligible.
- **On the leading edge of WNS**, and/or in the vicinity of where *Pd* fungal pathogen has been detected and bats may be affected, projects should focus on treatments and/or management strategies to minimize the impact of WNS.

- **In the established or endemic area**, where *Pd* and WNS have caused significant mortality and all hibernacula are assumed to be impacted, projects should focus on improving recruitment and protecting significant remaining bat populations to promote recovery. Projects may focus on implementation of management strategies to minimize impacts of WNS in populations that continue to experience disease-related mortality in this area.

## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The BFF seeks to support management actions that address the priorities enumerated below. The goal of the program is to implement strategies that will have a meaningful impact on survival of bat populations. Proposals should include adaptive implementation of conventional and/or experimental management actions with a sound study design to monitor and evaluate results. The most competitive proposals will aim to implement treatments and management solutions for WNS to minimize the short and long-term impacts of the disease and encourage recovery in persisting populations. Research and development of potential management tools in earlier stages of development are also eligible for funding. Applicants are encouraged to consider cross-disciplinary and innovative approaches to solving challenges associated with implementing management solutions. Collaborations (e.g., between institutions and agencies, across disciplines, etc.) that leverage the best thinking and resources are encouraged.

### **1. Deliver treatments or implement management tools and strategies that prevent exposure of bats to infectious *Pd* or improve survival from WNS.**

BFF is inviting proposals that focus on treating or managing the host, pathogen, and/or environment to limit spread and impacts of WNS. Proposed treatments may involve ecological, molecular, synthetic, biochemical, mechanical, and other strategies that reduce the impacts of WNS on bats; and/or may demonstrate new disinfection products or procedures to minimize reservoirs of *Pd* in the environment. Safety and feasibility at individual through ecosystem scales will be evaluated for all proposed actions. All applications must describe the benefits, risks and costs of the proposed management solutions, incorporating non-target effects to organisms and the environment and frequency of repeating the application for the intended benefits. Projects that propose work at earlier stages of research and development must provide a clear timeline of steps required to reach field readiness and include a phased study plan (if appropriate).

### **2. Deliver treatments or implement management tools or habitat conservation strategies in the field that help WNS-affected bat populations to recover from the impacts of WNS.**

BFF is inviting proposals that seek to help bat populations and species that have been impacted by WNS to stabilize and recover. These actions may overlap with those identified in priority 1 above. The most competitive projects in this category should provide population-level benefits to impacted bat species and demonstrate how the actions bring progress toward recovery.

Projects may include, but are not limited to the following strategies:

- Genetic/genomic manipulations, or other molecular technologies, that reduce *Pd*'s ability to proliferate, survive, spread, and/or infect bats.

- Development and implementation of habitat modification and enhancement strategies that result in guidance and/or direct action to improve survival of WNS-affected bats (e.g., restoring foraging habitats, improving maternity roosting habitats, installing or replacing gates at cave/mine entrances that restrict public access and reduce human disturbance.)
- Biological or chemical controls, which include, but are not limited to antimicrobial or antifungal agents, antagonistic pathogens (mycoviruses), probiotics, bacteria or fungi that are capable of reducing, inhibiting or preventing the growth and/or establishment of *Pd in the environment*.
- Immune-modulating techniques to reduce host susceptibility to WNS.
- Testing field efficacy and feasibility of treatments or strategies across relevant environmental and biological settings.
- Testing combinations of treatment agents and/or management strategies to optimize benefits under varying conditions.
- Completing situational testing of protocols and non-target effects needed to deploy a management tool or combination of tools in specific locations.

## 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.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Bats for the Future Fund has a list of metrics in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact *John Wright* to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Metric	Additional Guidance
<b>Priority: Deliver field treatments or implement management tools and strategies that prevent exposure of bats to infectious <i>Pd</i> or improve survival from WNS.</b>	
BFF - Disease control - # of sites protected	Enter the number of sites being treated. In the notes, elaborate on the number of sites treated.
BFF – Disease control - # of sites that remain uncontaminated	Enter the number of sites that remain uncontaminated by <i>Pd</i> within your study area as a result of the proposed actions.
BFF – Disease control - # of sites with persistent populations	Enter the number of sites that have persistent bat populations as a result of the proposed actions. In the notes, indicate % of these sites out of the total number of sites that received treatment from your project.
BFF - Disease control - # individuals protected	Enter the number of individuals receiving treatment directly. In the notes, break out the number of individuals by species being affected/treated. Consider measurement of disease incidence and prevalence to determine success of disease control studies.

BFF – Disease control - # of species benefiting	Enter the number of species that directly benefit from your project. In the notes, provide a list of the species affected.
BFF - Monitoring - # sites being monitored	Enter the number of bat sites being monitored related to hibernacula, maternity colonies, captive colonies, treatment efficacy, or collateral effects, etc.
<b>Priority: Deliver field treatments or implement management tools or habitat conservation strategies that help WNS-affected bat populations to recover from the impacts of WNS.</b>	
BFF - Disease control - # of sites protected	Enter the number of sites being treated or protected. In the notes, elaborate on the number of sites treated.
BFF – Improved management practices - # of acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres treated with a conservation/restoration strategy or best management practice to improve the quality of bat habitat
BFF – Disease control - # of sites with persistent populations	Enter the number of sites that have persistent bat populations as a result of the proposed actions. In the notes, indicate % of these sites out of the total number of sites that received treatment from your project.
BFF - Survivorship – Mortality rate	Enter the beginning mortality rate and the predicted change in mortality rate as a result of the proposed actions. In the Notes section describe the % decrease in mortality rate demonstrated by your study and the scale of impact (e.g. site, county, etc.).
BFF - Disease control - # individuals protected	Enter the number of individuals receiving treatment directly. In the notes, break out the number of individuals by species being affected/treated. Consider measurement of disease incidence and prevalence to determine success of disease control studies.
BFF – Disease control - # of species benefiting	Enter the number of species that directly benefit from your project. In the notes, provide a list of the species affected.
BFF – Disease control – fungal load rate	Enter the beginning prevalence of <i>Pd</i> rate and the predicted ending prevalence of <i>Pd</i> rate. In the Notes section describe the % decrease in prevalence of <i>Pd</i> rate demonstrated by your study and the scale of impact (e.g. site, county, etc.).
BFF - Monitoring - # sites being monitored	Enter the number of bat sites being monitored related to hibernacula, maternity colonies, captive colonies, treatment efficacy, or collateral effects, etc.
<b>Priority: Other</b>	
BFF - Research - # studies used to inform management	Enter the number of studies completed whose findings lead to direct management recommendations. In the notes section discuss publication goals

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal Governments and Organizations, research and educational institutions, and for-profit entities. For-profit applicants: please note that this is a request for grant proposals, not a procurement of goods and services; see the Budget section below for specific cost considerations.
- Ineligible applicants include unincorporated individuals.

### Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- The following types of proposals are not eligible for funding under the BFF:
  - Species composition, distribution, movement and habitat-use studies, unless directly tied to implementation of a management strategy
  - Monitoring studies unrelated to the development of field treatments or management tools for WNS
  - Development of *Pd* or WNS detection methods or tools, unless directly linked to deployment of a specified treatment
  - Outreach and education programs
  
- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.
- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

Grant requests must be greater than \$50,000 and should be no more than \$250,000; however, higher amounts may be considered for projects that enact lasting strategies *within the grant period of performance* to benefit impacted bat species on a widespread basis. Applicants contemplating requesting more than \$250,000 should contact NFWF staff in advance for guidance.

**Match:** A match valued at 50 percent of the total grant amount requested from BFF (not the total project budget) is preferred but not required.

**Grant Period:** Projects must start within six months of award and be completed within no more than three years after notification of grant award. Projects that achieve proposed outcomes within two years are preferred. Conditional notification of award is projected to be August 2023 with a public announcement in October 2023.

## 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 listed in this Request for Proposals, and also addresses complementarity and transferability.

- **Complementarity** – Project has potential and a plan to transfer project results to real-world bat conservation and/or to be scaled-up (including providing cost estimates associated with scaling up) and integrated into government programs and policies. Project includes a plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.
- **Transferability** – Project has potential and a plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

**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. Project also addresses qualifications and collaboration:

- **Qualifications** –The applicant, organization, and partner experience is relevant to delivery of the project, and/or entity has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation projects with specific measurable results.
- **Collaboration** – The project leverages expertise, knowledge, talents and resources from multiple partners (e.g., across disciplines, countries, academic institutions, agencies, etc.) to strategically advance and accelerate implementation of treatments and management tools or strategies.

**Novelty** – Project explores a novel tool or action, or leads to significant improvements in efficacy, scalability, or safety of an existing management action. Projects should not duplicate the effect or utility of tools or actions already being actively pursued by the WNS response community unless the proposed action expands the application of these tools to additional locations or species to achieve intended benefits.

**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. Proposal describes the community characteristics of the project area, identifies any communities impacted, describes outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Proposal uses demographic data to support descriptions and provides letters of

support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**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 must be 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.

This funding opportunity will award grants of federal financial assistance funds; applicants must be able to comply with the OMB Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200). While for-profit entities are eligible applicants, charges to a potential award may include actual costs only; recipients may not apply loaded rates or realize profit from an award of federal financial assistance funds.

**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.

**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.

**Regulatory Compliance Requirements** – Projects selected for an award will likely include test materials that are subject to regulation by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, pesticides), U.S. Health and Human Services, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act, drugs) or the U.S. Department of Agriculture Center for Veterinary Biologics (Virus, Serum and Toxin Act, vaccines). Proposals must demonstrate that the Principal Investigator understands the regulation of their test material and a present a plan for meeting regulatory requirements. Some information concerning some regulatory authorities can be found in the publication [\*A Decision Support Tool for Determining Federal Regulatory Authority over Products for Vertebrate Animals.\*](#)

Projects selected also will 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. Follow the link to download the compliance evaluation [templates](#) that must be completed and submitted to FWS if your project is selected to receive a grant. These completed templates will be used by FWS to determine compliance with the above acts.

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 and permission to work on land managed by public or private landowners or managers. 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. Applicants will be required to provide specific information about study sites, species used, sample sizes, and other criteria needed to comply with regulations. NFWF encourages applicants to contact relevant authorities in advance of completing a proposal to ensure the support of proposed work.

**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.

**Animal Care** - Principal Investigators will be expected to maintain compliance with the Animal Welfare Act and its regulations with satisfactory review and approval of animal activities in research protocols by a USDA-registered and/or PHS-assured Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee. Use of animal subjects must be appropriate for the current state of knowledge. Applicants must provide a clear description of how study animals will be selected and what their final disposition will be. Applicants must justify the need to use terminal sampling if that is the expected outcome.



## TIMELINE

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

<b>RFP Release Date</b>	February 21, 2023
<b>Applicant Webinar</b>	March 28, 2023 2:00-3:00 pm EDT Register <a href="#">HERE</a>
<b>Full Proposal Due Date</b>	April 27, 2023 11:59 pm EDT
<b>Review Period</b>	May - June
<b>Awards Announced</b>	August 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 RFP document can be downloaded [here](#).

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

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

*John Wright*  
[John.wright@nfwf.org](mailto:John.wright@nfwf.org)  
202-595-2478

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.