NATIONAL COASTAL RESILIENCE FUND
INCREASING THE NATION'S NATURAL DEFENSES

2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Pre-Proposal Webinar (Recording here):	Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
Pre-Proposal Due Date:	Wednesday, April 12, 2023 by 11:59 PM ET
Full Proposal Invitations:	Mid to End of May 2023
Full Proposal *by Invite Only* Due Date:	Wednesday, June 28, 2023 by 11:59 PM ET

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is pleased to announce the 2023 National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF) Request for Proposals (RFP). NFWF will make investments in planning, design, and implementation of natural and nature-based solutions. The goal is to enhance protections for coastal communities from the impacts of storms, floods, and other natural coastal hazards and to improve habitats for fish and wildlife.

NFWF will award approximately $140 million in grants to create and restore natural systems to increase protection for communities from current and future coastal hazards and improve habitats for fish and wildlife species. 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.

Natural habitats such as coastal marshes and wetlands, coastal forests, rivers, lakes, and streams, dune and beach systems, and oyster and coral reefs – maintained at a significant size for the habitat type and natural hazard being addressed – can provide communities with enhanced protection and buffering from the growing impacts of natural coastal hazards, including rising sea- and lake- levels, changing flood patterns, increased frequency and intensity of storms, and other environmental stressors. NFWF's regional coastal resilience assessments identify areas, called *Resilience Hubs* [1], where natural resource restoration efforts will have the greatest impact for human community resilience and fish and wildlife. Projects need ***not*** be located in an area identified by NFWF as a *Resilience Hub* to be eligible, but applicants may find this tool useful to assess projects based on the dual benefits to habitats and human communities. Applicants may explore *Resilience Hubs* on the Coastal Resilience and Evaluation Siting Tool (CREST).

This program is primarily funded by, and coordinated with, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Limited funding is available in partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense to support projects advancing nature-based solutions ***in the vicinity of*** but not within the boundaries of DOD installations and ranges that enhance military resilience to coastal hazards (for more information see the Funding Availability and Match section). Additional funding is provided by other

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[1] More about NFWF's coastal resilience assessment can be found at https://www.nfwf.org/programs/national-coastal-resilience-fund/regional-coastal-resilience-assessment.

partners, including, Occidental, Shell USA, Inc., and TransRe. NFWF will also seek to leverage public or private funds that align with the goals of the NCRF projects to extend the impact of this program.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The NCRF is a national program focused on enhancement of resilience for coastal communities. Projects must be located within the coastal areas of U.S. coastal states, including the Great Lakes states, and U.S. territories and tribal lands. For the purpose of this funding opportunity, the eligible project area is defined as all coastal Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 8 watersheds that drain to the sea and any adjacent HUC 8 watersheds that are particularly low-lying or tidally influenced ("coastal areas");[2] a map of the NCRF geographic footprint can be found here.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All projects under this program must demonstrate dual benefits to both coastal communities and habitats. The NCRF supports projects that will result in the creation and/or restoration of natural systems to increase the resilience of communities from coastal hazards and improve habitats for fish and wildlife species.

Award decisions will be made based on regional circumstances and needs, but all proposals must address the following priorities:

- **Nature-Based Solutions**: Projects must focus on identifying or implementing natural, nature-based or hybrid solutions,[3] such as restoring coastal marshes, reconnecting floodplains, rebuilding dunes or other natural buffers, or installing living shorelines (hereinafter "nature-based solutions").

- **Community Resilience Benefit**: Projects must show clear benefits in terms of reducing current and projected threats to communities from natural coastal hazards, including, but not limited to: sea-level rise, lake-level change, coastal erosion, increased frequency and intensity of storms, and impacts from other chronic or episodic factors (e.g., nuisance flooding during high tides, permafrost melt) (hereinafter collectively "coastal hazards").

- **Fish and Wildlife Benefit**: Projects must help to improve habitats for fish and wildlife species. Proposals should be as specific as possible in identifying the anticipated benefits to habitats and species that will result from the project proposed.

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[2] The NCRF footprint map can be found here
https://www.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=1dd16e528fd844b49d765b51402feb8c&amp%3Bextent
[3] The term "nature-based solutions" is defined as natural, engineered and hybrid ("green-gray") approaches that strategically protect, restore, sustainably manage or mimic ecosystems to conserve or restore ecosystem functions and natural processes with the goal of reducing community exposure to natural hazards and climate stressors and enhancing habitats for fish and wildlife. In the context of the NCRF, nature-based solutions are those designed to reduce community exposure to coastal hazards and enhance the resilience of coastal communities and habitats to a changing climate. Where a proposal includes significant gray-infrastructure elements (e.g., tide gates, culverts, breakwaters) as part of the project design, the proposal should describe how the gray infrastructure elements will help to conserve or restore ecosystem function or natural processes, enhance community resilience and habitat restoration outcomes, *or* will be funded with matching contributions.

Further priority will be given to projects that demonstrate:

- **Community Impact and Engagement**: Projects that provide risk reduction or job creation benefits to underserved or tribal (both federally recognized tribes and those tribes that are not federally recognized) communities and directly engage[4] community members in project design and implementation will be prioritized for funding. Projects that are informed by Indigenous Traditional Knowledge (ITK), promote tribal co-stewardship, and/or that protect or enhance habitat for subsistence species or contribute to tribal food security are also encouraged. Projects should engage community-level partners (e.g., community-based or tribal organizations, community leaders, municipalities, NGOs, local installation representatives) to help design, implement, and maintain projects; secure maximum benefits for communities; and ensure sustainability and long-term maintenance post-grant award. Projects that are community-led, incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged.

- **Innovation, Transferability and Sustainability**: NFWF encourages projects that seek to re-shape our thinking on what constitutes coastal community resilience to climate impacts as experienced across different geographies, including approaches that use innovative and sustainable approaches for addressing coastal hazards in consideration of future climate risks, and that are transferable, scalable and catalytic. Projects will be prioritized if they include specific plans for adaptively managing and/or transferring and scaling the resilience approaches developed through the project to ensure broader impact and integration into other government plans, programs, or policies in the community or region.

Project Categories

To implement these program priorities, NFWF funds activities in four categories designed to advance a project through NFWF's "project pipeline" from planning to implementation: 1) Community Capacity Building and Planning; 2) Site Assessment and Preliminary Design; 3) Final Design and Permitting; 4) Restoration Implementation.

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[4] Examples of activities that are considered "direct community engagement" include:
- Community partners are part of or leading the project team receiving funding through the grant;
- Community has opportunities to provide direct input into the project design and implementation (e.g., community design charrettes, resident surveys that directly inform project design and execution, community advisory committee with decision-making authority);
- Community is directly engaged through specific active engagement strategies (e.g., workshops, classroom activities, field trips, and volunteer activities (virtual or in-person);
- The project creates jobs in the target community or includes jobs training as a direct outcome of the project;
- The project engages in specific cultural activities with the community (e.g. employing cultural expertise in engagement activities); and
- Project provides community with direct decision-making authority (e.g., community voting directly informs decisions on implementation).
- For projects requesting DOD funding, installation personnel are part of the project team and engaged throughout the proposal develop and execution.

| 1. Community Capacity Building & Planning | → | 2. Site Assessment & Preliminary Design | → | 3. Final Design & Permitting | → | 4. Restoration Implementation |

Except for *Community Capacity Building and Planning* projects, proposals should demonstrate the process by which the proposed project has been prioritized to address specific community threats and outline previous work that has been completed that makes the project ready for funding under the proposed pipeline category.

Applicants should apply under the *ONE* category that best describes the purpose and activities that will be implemented during the project. While some cross-over between categories is allowed, NFWF strongly discourages "design/build" projects (i.e., proposals seeking funding to both design and construct a restoration project). Restoration-implementation projects that can begin construction within one year of the award date will be prioritized for funding.

While projects that have been previously funded under earlier pipeline categories are not guaranteed funding and each proposal will be reevaluated for competitiveness at subsequent stages of the pipeline, NFWF prioritizes proposals that seek to advance previously funded NCRF projects to the next stage in the project pipeline (i.e., "pipeline projects"). NFWF also reserves the ability to review and fund pipeline projects, which have already been evaluated for consistency with the NCRF program priorities and criteria listed in the RFP, under an expedited schedule (e.g., through early invitations to submit full proposals).

Community Capacity Building and Planning: Many coastal communities are in the early phases of understanding and identifying their resilience needs and it is understood that proposed projects in this category may look very different depending on the goals and needs of the community and stakeholders involved. Capacity may take the form of building local expertise, hiring or supporting personnel necessary to implement the project activities and functions needed to ensure the success and transferability of the project, providing training, engaging community members, supporting planning or broader environmental or socioeconomic data collection, among other activities.

Projects under this category should support the development of a plan or plans that prioritize resilience strategies and projects, and identify specific efforts that, when implemented, will meet community goals of increasing resilience and improving habitat for fish and wildlife. Projects should demonstrate community leadership and engagement while integrating community input in decision-making to ensure that the project is addressing the specific resilience needs and priorities of the community, helping communities identify and overcome implementation challenges, and supporting development of resilience strategies or projects that can be advanced in future years, with a focus on nature-based solutions. Proposed projects should result, at a minimum, in communities that are well-prepared to begin site assessment and design for specific strategies or nature-based coastal resilience projects that enable them to seek future funding under this program or other Federal, state, or local programs.

Proposals under this category should clearly describe the coastal community(ies) and the geography(ies) for which resilience projects will be considered; how communities will be centered and engaged; the factors, criteria and methodology(ies) that will be considered in prioritizing resilience projects and strategies; and the specific nature-based solutions likely to be considered in the planning efforts. Planning efforts and deliverables should be carefully scaled and scoped to ensure that specific nature-based resilience projects are identified through the planning process and can be advanced to the next stages of the project pipeline in future phases of work. Proposals focused on a smaller geographic area should consider opportunities to partner with other communities or stakeholders to increase the scale of the project's impact and to ensure broad utility and transferability of the resulting plan(s).

Applicants are encouraged to collaborate with a diverse suite of partners and sectors (e.g. residents and community leaders; community groups; local, federal, state, regional, territorial, or tribal governments or affiliates; emergency management, natural resource, fish and wildlife, transportation and/or economic development, planning and public work agencies/officials). Projects that engage and involve key partners, community members, and stakeholders throughout the planning process to ensure broad utility of the resulting resilience plan will be more competitive. Proposals should explain how these partners and stakeholders will be meaningfully involved in the planning and prioritization process, how the proposed funding will support their involvement, and how the plan and the stakeholders involved will help advance future implementation. Projects that are designed to inform decision-making and future project implementation at the local, state, regional, territorial, or tribal level(s) will be more competitive.

Site Assessment and Preliminary Design: Many coastal resilience projects require preliminary design and feasibility assessments to lay the groundwork for successful implementation to meet resilience targets for communities and natural resources. Projects under this category have been previously identified and prioritized in resilience planning efforts, where more work is needed to consider and determine appropriate site(s) and project(s) for achieving resilience goals and maximizing fish and wildlife benefits. At the end of the grant period, projects under this category are expected to be ready for the next phase, final design and permitting.

Most *Site Assessment and Preliminary Design* projects are expected to result in a preliminary design that allows the community to make a "go/no-go" decision on the project (this is generally between a 30-60% design depending on the needs of the community). Eligible activities under this category include, but are not limited to, the evaluation of potential project sites and project alternatives, continued and expanded stakeholder engagement efforts, assessing potential risk reduction benefits of project alternatives, gathering baseline data, conducting cost-benefit analyses, preliminary engagement with permitting agencies, and preparing preliminary project designs.

Proposals should clearly describe the planning and prioritization activities that have led to selection of the proposed project and the resilience goals of the project. This can include relevant resilience or other plans for the project area, prioritization tools, cost-benefit analysis, etc. Proposals should describe and provide specific examples of the types of nature-based solutions they anticipate designing. If a project will develop several conceptual designs and advance a small portion of those to preliminary designs, the proposal should be clear that the focus of preliminary designs to be developed will be nature-based solutions that have clear community resilience and fish and wildlife benefits. Proposals that describe key partners, community members, and stakeholders and how they will be engaged will be more competitive.

While *Site Assessment and Preliminary Design* projects are not required to secure permits for project restoration during the period of performance of a NFWF grant, proposals should ensure affected landowners and community members are supportive and indicate plans for preliminary conversations with relevant permitting officials by the end of the grant period. Proposals will be more competitive if they demonstrate an understanding of the regulatory context and include a description of how funded activities will help advance permitting of natural or nature-based project(s) in future phases of work.

Final Design and Permitting: Applicants may request funding to support final design and permitting for on-the-ground projects. Such funding may be used to advance projects from conceptual or preliminary designs into final designs and engineering plans, continue and expand stakeholder engagement efforts, prepare detailed cost estimates, engage permitting officials at various levels of government, and other related tasks to position projects for "restoration-ready" implementation. Proposals can include some preliminary design, site assessment, baseline monitoring provided that the project can be completed within 3 years of the start of the grant and result in a 90-100% design for the project.

Projects are not expected to achieve immediate environmental or conservation outcomes by the end of the grant period. However, proposals should demonstrate that the project, when implemented, will address needs prioritized through a formal coastal resilience or other planning process(es) and meet specific NCRF goals related to community resilience and ecosystem enhancements. Proposals for larger, more comprehensive project(s) are likely to be more competitive. However, proposals for smaller-scale projects can also be competitive if the efforts will increase the transferability of the approach in the region and will contribute to broader scale implementation across the community, region, or watershed. Proposals that describe plans to increase the transferability of the approach and to engage of key partners, community members, and stakeholders will be more competitive.

Final Design and Permitting projects are not required to obtain permits by the end of the grant period, but projects should result in demonstrated readiness to move a designed project to the restoration phase, including a demonstration that the resulting project design will be sufficient to meet requirements for environmental review and permitting. Recognizing that permitting requirements may vary among states, counties, tribes, territories, etc., proposals should demonstrate an understanding of the relevant permitting considerations to be addressed and should specifically describe planned activities to engage permitting officials at various levels of government early on and throughout the design process and how those activities will prepare the project for submission of permitting applications.

Restoration Implementation: Applicants under this category are requesting funds to construct a restoration project and projects must include a year of post-construction monitoring to assess the outcomes of the project. Eligible projects include ecosystem restoration projects and the construction of nature-based solutions, where tangible community resilience and conservation outcomes can be measured. *Restoration Implementation* projects should advance both community resilience goals (e.g. reduced risks from coastal hazards, protection of critical assets, people and property), and conservation goals (e.g. creation or restoration of habitat to quality suitable for target species). Proposals must clearly describe how the project will protect and enhance the resilience of built and natural systems, help mitigate the impacts of future storms and other coastal hazards on key, local community assets (such as military facilities, emergency services, infrastructure, and centers of economic activity), and the expected benefits to habitat and fish and wildlife. Projects should result in measurable and observable improvements to these systems. Projects are required to include at least one-year of post-construction monitoring to assess the outcomes of the project, but projects that conduct monitoring *only* are not eligible.

Projects proposed under this category are expected to have already been prioritized through planning process(es) that address coastal resilience. Projects that are "implementation-ready" will be prioritized for funding, meaning that all design and engineering plans necessary for implementation have been completed or are near completion, and the applicant demonstrates readiness to secure all permits and other approvals necessary to begin construction within one year or less of the award date. Projects that have completed final designs and secured all necessary permits and approvals will receive higher priority for funding.

Proposals for larger, more comprehensive projects that are designed for greater impact are likely to be more competitive; however, where appropriate, 'demonstration' or 'pilot'-scale projects will be considered. If a 'demonstration' or 'pilot' project is proposed, please be clear about the need for this scale of project and any efforts that will be taken to increase the transferability of the project to broader, larger-scale implementations of nature-based solutions in the future in the geographic region. Applicants can increase the competitiveness of smaller-scale projects in more urbanized areas or areas with site constraints by describing the broad benefits that will be delivered by the project, including risk reduction benefits, the number of people that are anticipated to benefit from the project, and by including specific project elements designed to ensure that the resilience approaches developed through the project can be scaled or replicated in other parts of the community or watershed.

At the full proposal stage, proposals should clearly describe the status of permitting for the project and include a comprehensive project schedule describing all activities from the start of the award, including when the project will commence restoration activities and demonstrating that the project will be able to complete construction and post-construction monitoring by no later than December 2027. Proposals should clearly state the month and year in which the project's final design was or will be completed, describe all permits needed to begin construction of the project, and provide information on the status of permitting (e.g., date when permit applications were submitted or date when permits were issued). To the extent possible, applicants should also include a cost breakdown by project activity to enable an evaluation of cost effectiveness. In cases where funding is being requested for a component of work that is part of a larger design or effort, applicants should clearly identify what portion of the design will be implemented with the requested NCRF funding. At the full proposal stage, applications must upload all relevant engineering and design documentation and complete specific questions related to needed permits and permit status.

Projects may be conducted on Federal,[5] tribal, state or local government lands, or private lands where there is a demonstrated commitment from the landowner to support implementation of the project and long-term protection of the lands for conservation purposes. Projects that consider the larger landscape and involve multiple landowners and/or partners and jurisdictions, as appropriate, are encouraged. Where invited to submit a full proposal, projects proposed on private land are highly encouraged to submit a letter of support for the project from landowner(s) and projects with landowner letters of support will be prioritized.

Restoration Implementation projects should be able to be constructed within three years of the start of the grant and must include at least one year of post-construction monitoring (total of 4 years). For many habitat types NFWF has developed monitoring metrics and protocols that set the minimum monitoring

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[5] Federal lands do not include land within a DOD installation's boundary.

standard that will need to be incorporated in full proposals. These minimum metrics and protocol standards are located here.

Acquisition of land that is *essential* for implementing a larger-scale *Restoration Implementation* project and that is ineligible for other federal funding sources *may* be considered an eligible activity on a *very limited* basis. Proposals should demonstrate that the acquisition is viable and required to implement a larger-scale *Restoration Implementation* project and is necessary to achieving specific and measurable community resilience and ecological outcomes. If you are seeking funding for land acquisition, you *must* reach out to NFWF program staff (listed below) to discuss your project idea and need for funding for land acquisition. Proposals seeking funding for land acquisition *only* are not eligible. Where a proposal is using *non-NFWF funding sources* to support acquisition(s) of land, those funds can be considered as part of the match or federal leverage for the project; see Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance for more information.

To evaluate projects seeking funding for *Restoration Implementation* projects, NFWF often asks applicants to host a virtual site visit or an in-person site visit for higher budget or more complex projects. If required for your project, NCRF program staff will reach out after full proposals have been submitted to schedule a site visit.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, applicants will be asked to report on specific metrics from the list below that relate to their project. Applicants should select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible project metrics for this program are shown in the table below). In most cases, this will be 1-2 metrics from the relevant project category section and 1-2 metrics from the *Community Benefit and Outreach* section (for all project categories). For restoration metrics, please represent one acre/mile in **only one** metric. For example, if you are enhancing a floodplain that is also considered a wetland, just select the most relevant habitat. If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Arielle Mion (Arielle.Mion@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

In addition to the project metrics listed below, NFWF has developed additional ecological and socio-economic indicators to better assess the projects' impacts on resilience. NFWF will request applicants that are invited to the full proposal for *Restoration Implementation* to include specific ecological monitoring metrics and protocols into their projects and NFWF may contract a third party to collect socio-economic data across several funded resilience projects post-award. All awardees under this program may be engaged during their period of performance or in the years following to support these monitoring and evaluation efforts.

All **Project Categories – Community Benefit and Outreach**

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Community Outreach and Engagement	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Volunteer participation - # of volunteer hours	Enter the number of volunteer hours in this project.
	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – # people reached by outreach,	Enter the number of people meaningfully engaged in the process

training, or technical assistance activities	of the proposed project. Please indicate the groups targeted by outreach efforts and how they will be engaged.

Community Capacity Building and Planning

Project Activity	*Recommended Metric*	*Additional Guidance*
Tool development for decision-making	# tools developed that are used by decision-makers	Enter number of tools developed to be used by decision-makers
Government Agency Participation and Engagement	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance - # of governmental entities participating	Enter the number of municipalities, local, state, and federal government entities participating in the project. In the NOTES, add the names of these institutions and their primary role.

Site Assessment and Preliminary Design

Project Activity	*Recommended Metric*	*Additional Guidance*
Site Assessment and Design Plans Development	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives - Volunteer participation - # volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers engaged in assessment of sites and preliminary design. In the NOTES, please include the percent design to be completed at the conclusion of the project.
Government Agency Participation and Engagement	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance - # of governmental entities participating	Enter the number of municipalities, local, state, and federal government entities participating in the project. In the NOTES, add the names of these institutions and their primary role.

Final Design and Permitting

Project Activity	*Recommended Metric*	*Additional Guidance*
Engineering and Design Plans Developed	Planning, Research, Monitoring – Restoration planning/design/permitting - # E&D plans developed	Enter the number of Engineering and Design plans developed to construction ready (90-100%). Generally, there will be one plan per project to be constructed.
Government Agency Participation and Engagement	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance - # of governmental entities participating	Enter the number of municipalities, local, state, and federal government entities participating in the project. In the NOTES, add the names of these institutions and their primary role.

Restoration Implementation

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Floodplain Restoration	Habitat Restoration – Floodplain Restoration – Acres Restored	Enter the number of floodplain acres restored. In the NOTES, indicate % of vegetation on the pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%) and the dominant vegetation being restored (e.g., Marsh, Swamp).
Beach and/or Dune Restoration	Habitat Restoration – Beach habitat quality improvements – Miles Restored	Enter the number of miles of beach or dune restored. In the NOTES, indicate restoration action(s) taken (e.g., beach enhancement, dune vegetation planting).
Living Shoreline	Habitat Restoration – Living Shorelines – Linear Feet Restored	Enter the linear feet of living shoreline created. In the NOTES, indicate the living shoreline substrate used (e.g., rock sills, oyster castles, reef balls). Please do not double count with other metrics. For example, if the living shoreline includes oyster reef creation, capture the linear feet of oyster reef created here OR in the marine habitat metric for oyster reefs restoration/creation, not both.

Marsh/Wetland Restoration	Habitat Restoration – Wetland Restoration – Acres Restored	Enter the total number of marsh or wetland acres restored. Do NOT include acres of marsh or wetland outside the scope of the work proposed in your application (i.e., marsh landward of a living shoreline proposal). In the NOTES, specify type of wetland using the Cowardin classification system[6] (e.g., Intertidal Emergent Estuarine Wetland) and indicate % of vegetation on pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%) and the proposed restoration method(s) to be used (e.g., invasive species removal, thin- layer dredge deposition).
	Habitat Restoration - Erosion Control - Acres Restored	Enter total acres of eroding wetlands restored. In the NOTES, indicate the type of wetland using the Cowardin classification system (e.g., Intertidal Emergency Estuarine Wetland) and restoration method(s) used (e.g., invasive species removal, thin- layer dredge deposition). If it is a wetland that is not eroding, please use the "Wetland restoration" metric.
Oyster Reef Restoration	Habitat Restoration – Marine Habitat Restoration – Acres Restored	Enter the number of acres of oyster reef created/restored. If oyster reef substrate is being used to create a living shoreline and oyster restoration is not the primary objective of the activity, do not include this metric and instead use the living shoreline metric.
Coral Reef Restoration	Habitat Restoration – Marine Habitat Restoration – Acres Restored	Enter the number of acres of coral reef created/restored.

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[6] For more on the Cowardin classification system see https://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/wetlands/nwcs-2013

Submerged Aquatic Habitat	Habitat Restoration – Seagrass Restoration – Acres Restored	Enter the number of acres of seagrass restored/created
In-stream Restoration	Habitat Restoration – Instream Restoration – Miles Restored	Enter the number of miles of instream habitat restored.
Aquatic Connectivity Restoration	Habitat Restoration – Fish Passage Improvements - # of fish passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of fish passage barriers rectified. In the NOTES, indicate the number of remaining fish passage barriers in the system.
	Habitat Restoration – Fish Passage Improvements – miles of stream opened	Enter the number of stream miles opened. In the NOTES, specify those miles as a percentage of habitat available for restoration or reconnection. NFWF prefers that this metric indicate the miles of upstream habitat until the next barrier upstream (or end of flowline) as well as the miles of downstream habitat until the next barrier downstream using a dataset with fish passage that is relevant to your region.[7] This estimate should include both the mainstem of the stream or river and smaller tributaries. If another data source or methodology is used, please describe it in the NOTES section
Green Stormwater Infrastructure	Habitat Management – Green Infrastructure - Volume (gallons) of stormwater storage added	Enter the volume (in gallons) of stormwater storage added through green infrastructure improvements. Include projection of gallons for stormwater captured or infiltrated annually.

[7] For California datasets, see
https://www.calfish.org/ProgramsData/HabitatandBarriers/CaliforniaFishPassageAssessmentDatabase.aspx, for mid-Atlantic and Northeast states, see the North Atlantic Connectivity Collaborative (https://streamcontinuity.org/naacc).
(See https://www.calfish.org/ProgramsData/HabitatandBarriers/CaliforniaFishPassageAssessmentDatabase.aspx).

Habitat Management – Green Infrastructure - Square feet of impervious surface removed	Enter the square footage of impervious surface removed or retrofitted
Habitat Management – Green Infrastructure - Square feet of green infrastructure installed	Enter the square footage of green infrastructure installed. In the NOTES, describe the green infrastructure methods to be used (e.g., wetland restoration, bioswales)
Habitat Management – Green Infrastructure - # of trees planted	Enter the number of trees planted (include species, tree size, planting density and anticipated total acres of tree planting)

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities
- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state and territorial government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal governments and organizations, educational institutions, or commercial (for-profit) organizations.
    - o Tribal governments include all Native American tribal governments (both federally recognized tribes and those tribes that are not federally recognized).
    - o 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.
- As this program will award grants of Federal financial assistance funds, applicants must be able to comply with the OMB guidance in subparts A through F of 2 CFR 200 (OMB Uniform Guidance).
- Ineligible applicants include federal agencies or employees of federal agencies, foreign organizations, foreign public entities and unincorporated individuals.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds
- **Equipment**: Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment and will consider applications for funding essential equipment on a case-by-case basis. 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.

● All projects must take place within the United States or territories or their respective waterways.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The National Coastal Resilience Fund will award approximately $140,000,000 in grants in 2023, subject to Congressional appropriations and the availability of funds.

Average awards: There is no maximum limit on the award amounts that can be requested for individual grants. The amount requested for an individual project should reflect the scope and needs of the project proposed. NFWF expects that average awards for projects involving Community Capacity Building and Planning, Site Assessment and Preliminary Design, and Final Design and Permitting to be in the range of $100,000 to $1,000,000. For Restoration Implementation Projects, NFWF expects the average awards to be in the range of $1,000,000 to $10,000,000. However, it is expected that awards will vary significantly in amount based on the scope of the project, the work proposed, and regional variation in costs. Given available funding, proposals for larger scale, more comprehensive projects that are designed for greater impact are likely to be more competitive.

U.S. Department of Defense funding: The U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) may contribute up to $15 million in additional funds to support coastal resilience projects through the NCRF that benefit military installations. Such projects must meet all the requirements of this RFP and propose a project *in the vicinity of* a DOD installation or range.[8] DOD funds *cannot* be used to support projects directly on military lands (i.e., "inside the fence line" of the DOD installation or range). In the proposal narrative, applicants will be asked to provide additional information to clearly describe the coastal hazards that threaten the military mission, the nature-based solution proposed to address those threats, and how the project will maintain and improve military resilience and directly benefit defense mission capabilities[9] of the DOD installation or range the project is associated with. Coordinating with the local DOD installation before applying is strongly encouraged. Projects with clear support from local installation will be viewed favorably compared to those that have not engaged with the local installation to date.

Non-federal match: Non-federal match[10] is *not* required, but is encouraged to demonstrate broad support for the project. Match can be any combination of in cash and/or in-kind goods and services (for example external/partner services, volunteers or grantee in-kind, etc.) and there is no priority given to higher cash percentages. The ratio of matching contributions offered to grant funding requested is only one criterion considered during the review process. Full information about how to document non-federal match, including a description of acceptable sources of matching funds, is available at http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/faqs.aspx. Applicants who have questions regarding non-federal match beyond this guidance, may contact Arielle Mion (Arielle.Mion@nfwf.org)

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[8] For a map of DOD military installations and ranges see: https://repi.osd.mil/map

[9] DOD defines military installation resilience as "the capability of a miliary installation to avoid, prepare for, minimize the effect of, adapt to, and recover from extreme weather events or from anticipated or unanticipated change in environmental conditions that do, or have the potential to adversely affect the military installation or essential transportation, logistical, or other necessary resources outside of the military installation that are necessary in order to maintain, improve, or rapidly reestablish mission assurance and mission essential functions." (https://repiprimers.org/resilience/)

[10] If funds originated as a federal appropriation, they are unlikely to be considered as non-federal match.

Federal leverage: Applicants are encouraged to describe federal partner contributions in the match section of their application. These contributions will not count toward any non-federal match described above, but will help in understanding the amount of resources and partners contributing to the overall project and will be considered as part evaluating the broader support for the project.

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 alignment with the priorities of the program and the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

Prioritized in Existing Plans – Project has been prioritized through an existing planning process or identified as a need at the state, tribal, regional, or local level for addressing coastal resilience and demonstrates activities that support habitat, fish and wildlife restoration, and community resilience goals. Project complements and builds off other federal, tribal, state, and local conservation priorities that are consistent with the goals of the NCRF and can clearly connect ecosystem and coastal community resilience actions, including projects that contribute to other NOAA or NFWF 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 Impact and Engagement – 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. Projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes that incorporate traditional knowledge and community experience. Engagement is designed to ensure 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. The proposal identifies how stakeholders have been meaningfully engaged leading up to the stage of the project being proposed and how key partners and stakeholders will be involved in the project moving forward. The proposal describes the community characteristics of the project area, identifies any communities impacted by the project, uses demographic data to support descriptions, and specifically describes outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured.

Partnership – Applicants demonstrate strong partnerships with Federal, state, and local agencies, existing regional partnerships (e.g. Landscape Conservation Cooperatives, local installation representatives), as well as communities and/or non-profit organizations necessary to implement the project. Project is supported by a strong local partnership, including key state or local agencies with responsibility for developing and implementing coastal resilience plans, and that can leverage additional funds through matching contributions and sustain the work after the life of the grant. If invited to submit a full proposal, applicants are encouraged to include letters of support and commitment from partners, collaborators and other stakeholders key to the successful completion of the project to demonstrate that implementation of the project is feasible and a community priority.

Cost-Effectiveness – Applicant demonstrates that the proposed approach is economically the 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.

Transferability and Communication – Project includes a meaningful plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and to integrate project approaches into government plans, programs, and policies to ensure transferability and to catalyze future investment in the project or similar approaches in the community, region, or state. Proposal includes a plan for communicating information about the project to key stakeholder audiences, including local, state, regional, tribal, and federal decision-makers and other partners and stakeholders, as appropriate and needed to ensure transferability.

Long-term Sustainability and Adaptive Management – Project reflects planning, design, and long-term management approaches that take into account the future conditions of a site and ensure that the project can adapt to changing conditions. Project design either does not require maintenance or will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. Narrative includes how partnerships and/or future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring, maintenance and/or adaptive management activities, as well as risk associated with not securing future funding. For planning and design projects, narrative includes information on likely sources of funding for eventual project implementation.

Past Success – Applicant has demonstrated that the project team has necessary expertise and a proven track record of success in implementing complex projects with specific, measurable results.

Innovation – The project proposes to conceptualize and develop or apply innovative solutions for habitat restoration activities that incorporate best practices testing and learning to increase desired impact. Projects seeking to employ innovative thinking to approach community protection should still have nature-based solutions as part of the design.

Scale or Comprehensiveness – The project is at a large enough geographic scale to have an impact on reducing risks from coastal hazards. The project is comprehensive and designed for a greater impact – versus a 'demonstration' or 'pilot'-scale project. If a project is not itself large or comprehensive, then it proposes the advancement of a piece of a larger, more comprehensive effort underway. Proposals for smaller scale projects can increase their competitiveness by demonstrating the transferability of the pilot technique(s) and by including a plan in the scope of work for scaling or replicating the approach in ways that will increase the broader impact of the project in the community, region, or state, including through other plans, programs, policies, or future investments.

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. 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 non-federal 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 that reflect applicable laws and regulations.

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.

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. NFWF recognizes that organizations with more limited budgets may need an advance of funds to ensure successful implementation of a project; these applicants can contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options. A request for an advance of funds can be approved on a case-by-case basis where there is an imminent need of expenditure and the applicant provides details on how the funds will be used and a justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

Compliance Requirements – Selected projects may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and the National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. As may be applicable, successful applicants

may be required to comply with additional Federal, state, or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Quality Assurance – If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection, or data use, grantees may be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation (www.epa.gov/quality) and must comply with NOAA's Data Sharing Policy for all environmental data. Applicants should budget time and resources to complete these tasks.

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 U.S. 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. NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct conversations with all relevant permitting agencies.

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 the Federal funding is received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

Pre-Proposal Webinar:	Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 3:00 – 4:30 PM ET
Pre-Proposal Due Date:	Wednesday, April 12, 2023 by 11:59 PM ET
Full Proposal Invitations:	Mid to End of May 2023
Full Proposal Webinar:	Thursday, June 8, 2023 at 3:00 PM ET
Full Proposal **Invite Only** Due Date:	Wednesday, June 28, 2023 by 11:59 PM ET
Awards Announced:	Late November – Early December 2023

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Easygrants system.

1. Go to 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 later for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A Tip Sheet is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. The Tip Sheet 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 one of the following individuals based on your question:

If you have a question about a project idea in…	*Please contact…*
Northeastern states (ME, MA, NH, CT, RI, NY)	John Wright – John.Wright@nfwf.org
Mid-Atlantic states (NJ, PA, DE, MD, VA)	Stephanie Heidbreder – Stephanie.Heidbreder@nfwf.org
Southeastern and Gulf States (NC to TX)	Suzanne Sessine – Suzanne.Sessine@nfwf.org
California	Femke Freiberg – Femke.Freiberg@nfwf.org
Washington and Oregon	Alexander Mahmoud – Alexander.Mahmoud@nfwf.org
Alaska	Jana Doi – Jana.Doi@nfwf.org
Great Lakes	Aislinn Gauchay – Aislinn.Gauchay@nfwf.org
Hawaii, Caribbean and Pacific territories	Michelle Pico – Michelle.Pico@nfwf.org
General questions about this RFP or requirements of the program and questions about the online application and submission process	Arielle Mion – Arielle.Mion@nfwf.org

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

Easygrants Helpdesk
Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail: 202-595-2497
Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.
Include your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.