America the Beautiful Challenge 2023

2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar: Thursday, March 9, 2023, 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM Eastern Time
Pre-Proposal Due Date: Thursday, April 20, 2023, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time
Full Proposal Due Date (*by invitation only*): Thursday, July 20, 2023, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), through anticipated cooperative agreements from the Department of the Interior (DOI), Department of Defense (DOD), and the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), is pleased to announce the America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC) 2023 Request for Proposals (RFP). The ATBC vision is to streamline grant funding opportunities for new voluntary conservation and restoration projects around the United States. This RFP consolidates funding from multiple federal agencies and the private sector to enable applicants to conceive and develop large-scale, locally led projects that address shared funder priorities spanning public and private lands.

In year two of the ATBC approximately $116 million will be awarded in nationwide funding to conserve, connect and restore the lands, waters, and wildlife upon which we all depend. The ATBC seeks to fund projects across the following themes:

1. Conserving and restoring rivers, coasts, wetlands and watersheds
2. Conserving and restoring forests, grasslands and important ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks
3. Connecting and reconnecting wildlife corridors, large landscapes, watersheds, and seascapes
4. Improving ecosystem and community resilience to flooding, drought, and other climate-related threats
5. Expanding access to the outdoors, particularly in underserved communities

Collectively, these themes invite applicants to develop landscape-level ATBC proposals that address conservation and public access needs with: cumulative benefits to fish and wildlife, enhanced carbon sequestration and storage, benefits to and engagement with underserved communities, and protection of ecosystems through resilience-focused and nature-based solutions.

Projects funded through the ATBC will advance the principles underlying the America the Beautiful Initiative, as described in the [Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful](#) Report:

1. Pursue a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation
2. Conserve America's lands and waters for the benefit of all people
3. Support locally led and locally designed conservation efforts
4. Honor Tribal sovereignty and support the priorities of Tribal Nations
5. Pursue conservation and restoration approaches that create jobs and support healthy communities
6. Honor private property rights and support the voluntary stewardship efforts of private landowners and fishers
7. Use science as a guide
8. Build on existing tools and strategies with an emphasis on flexibility and adaptive approaches

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

ATBC is a nationwide program. Projects throughout the U.S., U.S. territories, and Tribal Nations are eligible for funding. Projects can be on public lands, Tribal lands, and private lands, and ideally span multiple landownership boundaries and jurisdictions. Locations will be prioritized where projects are guided by existing conservation or restoration plans as well as the program priorities listed below.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

ATBC will prioritize proposals that implement voluntary, large-scale, multi-state, on-the-ground conservation activities or otherwise lead to on-the-ground implementation through capacity building, community engagement, planning, and project design. The overarching goal is to advance existing landscape conservation or restoration plans and/or propose to knit together a diverse stakeholder partnership that develops and/or implements new plans. Projects should address priority species and/or habitat conservation actions identified in existing conservation, restoration, species recovery or other plans.[1] Projects that are informed by Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and promote Tribal co-stewardship are encouraged.

Competitive proposals will increase interagency, intergovernmental, and interstate collaboration and address more than one of the program priorities below.

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[1] Examples of existing conservation or recovery plans include NFWF's Conservation Landscapes; Migratory Bird Joint Ventures and their plans such as the Saltmarsh Sparrow Conservation Plan; Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) Sagebrush Conservation Strategy; NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife Conservation Frameworks for Great Plains and Sagebrush, Bobwhite Quail and Gopher Tortoise; Collaborative Landscape Conservation Designs such as Southeast Conservation Adaptation Strategy and Nature's Network; state-driven conservation efforts such as State Wildlife Actions Plans, Coastal Master Plans, and the State Action Plans for Big Game Migrations; Tribal conservation priorities and Tribal co-stewardship agreements; and local collaboratives such as the Black-foot Challenge, the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, Crown of the Continent Landscape Conservation Design, Salmon Superhighway, Sacramento Valley Salmon Recovery Program, Southeast Conservation Blueprint, and the Sentinel Landscapes Partnership. Similarly, applicants should incorporate science-based tools and data into their proposal where applicable. Examples include the USFS's Watershed Condition Classification (WCC) and Terrestrial Condition Assessment (TCA), Nature's Network Conservation Design, and WAFWA's Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool (CHAT). Applicants should develop projects with climate strategies in mind when possible and can reference the Advancing the National Fish and Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaption Strategy into a New Decade and the Voluntary Guidance for States to Incorporate Climate Adaptation into State Wildlife Actions Plans and other Management Plans. This list is not exhaustive, but rather indicative of the types of plans and strategies that can be integrated into proposals.

- **Benefit At-Risk Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Species.** Conserve and restore habitat to improve ecosystem function and biological diversity, as identified by conservation plans, IK, or emerging information for priority fish, wildlife, and/or plant resources, such as threatened and endangered species, and species of greatest conservation need (including game species).

- **Expand Habitat Connectivity.** Conserve and restore priority habitat and stopover areas along key migratory routes; conserve, restore or improve fish passage; conserve or restore lands and/or waters that are critical to habitat connectivity; or expand and enhance wildlife corridors that contribute to larger-scale conservation efforts (e.g., removing and right-sizing culverts, rehabilitating areas damaged by fire, removing encroaching trees from grassland and sagebrush ecosystems, restoring and reconnecting wetlands and floodplains, or treating exotic/invasive vegetation to improve habitat value).

- **Provide a Range of Ecosystem Services.** Demonstrate and quantify a range of ecosystem services restored (e.g., stream flow for aquatic resources, watershed health and function, carbon sequestration, restoration of Tribal subsistence resources).

- **Strengthen Ecosystem and Community Resilience.** Conserve and restore natural systems and habitats that help ecosystems and/or communities respond to, mitigate, and recover from disturbances like floods, wildfire, and drought (e.g., enhancing habitats for coastal resilience, invasive species prevention or removal to reduce wildfire risk, restoring resilient stand structure and species composition in fire prone forests, water conservation to address drought, expansion of wetlands for flood protection, grassland restoration for healthy prairie ecosystems).

- **Expand Public and Community Access to Nature.** Create, improve, or expand opportunities for public access and recreation—especially for underserved communities that lack access to the outdoors—in a manner consistent with the ecological needs of fish and wildlife habitat. Projects should enable high-quality recreational experiences (e.g., biking, birding, boating, fishing, hiking, outdoor education, cultural activities, hunting and wildlife viewing), and should be predominantly nature-based in application. *Hard infrastructure, such as, parking lots and visitor center amenities, are not eligible under this funding opportunity.*

- **Engage Local Communities.** Incorporate outreach to communities, particularly underserved communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaboration with farmers, ranchers, Tribal Nations, states or other land managers to produce measurable conservation benefits. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and/or co-design processes and incorporate IK. Projects should engage community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations), as appropriate, to help design, implement, and maintain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award.

- **Support Tribally Led Conservation and Restoration Priorities.** Prioritize projects that uplift Tribal and Indigenous-led efforts to improve fish and wildlife habitat (e.g., Tribal co-stewardship of federal or other lands, restoration of Tribal homelands, access to and/or restoration of sacred sites, restoration and enhancement of subsistence practices, and elevation of IK).

- **Contribute to Local or Tribal Economies.** Prioritize projects that, as a co-benefit, directly contribute to local economies and underserved communities (e.g., expand tourism or recreational economies, promote regenerative agriculture, and contribute to working lands and/or community or Tribal forestry). Applicants are encouraged to estimate the economic benefits that are expected because of the project (e.g., number of jobs sustained or created).

- **Contribute to Workforce Development.** Develop the next generation of conservation professionals, including through support for national service, youth, and conservation corps engaged in conservation and climate-related work. Projects that develop the restoration workforce, especially with AmeriCorps and 21st Century Conservation Service Corps programs, are encouraged.

- **Advance Sentinel Landscape Partnership Priorities.** Prioritize projects that accelerate the goals and initiatives across sentinel landscapes. Applicants are encouraged to engage with the Sentinel Landscapes Coordinators to learn how projects can help support resilience, habitat conservation, and land management practices around military installations and ranges.

GRANT CATEGORIES, FUNDING AVAILABILITY, AND MATCH

Approximately $116 million will be available for 2023 through five categories of grants. NFWF expects to award at least 10% of ATBC grant funding to Tribal and Native Nations and 3% to U.S. territories. Funding is being provided to NFWF through cooperative agreements, or similar mechanisms, that allow for agency participation. Projects that meet the goals and requirements of more than one category below may be funded by multiple ATBC funding partners. Applicants are strongly encouraged to apply for the category that best suits their project needs. For example, an implementation project that also benefits a Sentinel Landscape may apply to Category One and receive funding from both DOI and DOD. NFWF will identify and determine co-funding opportunities during the proposal review process. If submitting multiple proposals, please indicate priorities if any. **Funding in this RFP is contingent upon final execution of the agency awards to NFWF**. Please also refer to the specific Department/Agency level funding priorities found in Appendix 2:

1. **Implementation Grants:** Grants to implement projects that address program priorities on public, Tribal, and/or private lands; partnerships with NGOs and others through subawards are encouraged.
   - Eligible applicants: States, U.S. territories, and federally recognized Tribes

- Size: $1 million to $5 million, *Landscape scale restoration requests beyond $5 million may be considered on a limited case-by-case basis. Please contact NFWF program staff to discuss.*
- Length: up to four years
- Grants under this category are contingent upon awards by DOI

2. **Planning Grants:** Grants that enhance local capacity to implement future on-the-ground actions that address program priorities through community-based assessments, partnership building, planning, project design, and other technical assistance activities. Projects in this category should include multiple partners, be at a significant scale for the landscape/watershed/seascape, and clearly demonstrate how efforts will lead to implementation projects.

- Eligible applicants: States, U.S. territories, and federally recognized Tribes
- Size: $200,000 to $2 million
- Length: 2 to 3 years
- Grants under this category are contingent upon awards by DOI

3. **Sentinel Landscape Grants:** Grants will be funded through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program and will be prioritized to [Sentinel Landscapes](#) or areas that preserve or enhance military readiness. Projects in this category should include multiple partners and clearly contribute to outcomes identified in a Sentinel Landscape implementation plan or other applicable conservation or restoration implementation plan, by enhancing local capacity to implement future on-the-ground actions or by directly contributing to on-the-ground outcomes. Projects in this category must demonstrate benefit to DOD facilities and be in the vicinity of or ecologically linked to a DOD installation or range. DOD funds may not be used for work directly on military lands.

- Eligible applicants: Non-profits, local municipal governments, and educational institutions, States, U.S. territories, and Tribes
- Size: $250,000 to $1.5 million
- Length: 2 to 4 years
- Grants under this category are contingent upon awards by DOD

4. **National Forest Grants:** Grants will support projects on National Forest System lands to achieve the restoration of a forest ecosystem through the removal of vegetation, the use of prescribed fire, or the decommissioning of an unauthorized, temporary, or system road. Projects should target outcomes identified in a conservation or restoration implementation plan. Projects completing vegetation management should be connected to a watershed protection plan.

- ➢ Eligible applicants: Non-profits, local municipal governments, and educational institutions, States, U.S. territories, and Tribes

- ➢ Size: $250,000 to $1.5 million

- ➢ Length: 2 to 4 years

- ➢ Grants under this category are contingent upon awards by USFS

5. **Private Forests, Rangeland and Farmland Grants**: Grants will support outreach and engagement with private landowners for voluntary conservation efforts on working lands to advance NRCS [Working Lands for Wildlife Framework and Initiatives](#) (e.g. sagebrush, grasslands, bobwhite quail, northeast turtles, golden-winged warbler).

- ➢ Eligible applicants: Non-profits, local municipal governments, and educational institutions, States, U.S. territories, and Tribes

- ➢ Size: $200,000 to $500,000

- ➢ Length: 2 to 3 years

- ➢ Grants under this category are contingent upon awards by NRCS

Matching Funds

Non-federal match helps demonstrate broad support for the project and may be required for federal funding. The following is the minimum match (in-kind and cash) requirements for potential applicants:

DOI Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
States	90% of total project costs	10% of total project costs (11% of grant request), of which at least 2.5% must be cash
~~Tribal Nations & territories*~~	~~97% of costs~~	~~3% of costs, of which at least .75% must be cash~~ **(**COVERED for Tribal Nations, fully covered by partnership with Native Americans in Philanthropy; WAIVED for territories per DOI legal interpretation, see below)*

DOD Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All entities	100% of costs	Not required. DOD REPI Program funds can serve as a non-federal match for the other federal programs in the ATBC grants.

USFS Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All entities	80% of total project costs	20% of total project costs (24% of grant request) **(**COVERED for Tribal Nations, fully covered by Native Americans in Philanthropy)*

NRCS Technical Assistance Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All entities	50% of total project costs	50% of total project costs (equal to grant request)** **(**COVERED for Tribal Nations, fully covered by Native Americans in Philanthropy)*

*Pursuant to Section 601 of Pub. L. 96-205, as amended, the match requirement is waived for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP), as a part of their partnership with NFWF, will be providing all match for any granted Tribally led projects up to the 10% ATBC funding set aside for Tribal Nation grantees. Match for Tribally led projects funded beyond the 10% will be subject to NAP funding availability. Tribally led applications can leave the matching contributions section of Easygrants blank, NFWF will be able to tag NAP funds to applicable projects on the back end. If there is match that an applicant would like to include, you are still able to do so in Easygrants, but it is not required.

** Organizations relevant to any of NRCS's Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories[2] other than Tribes that are unable to meet the 1:1 non-federal matching contribution requirement are eligible to receive grant funding, but they must contact NFWF to discuss potential match adjustment options prior to submitting a proposal.

Applicants who are unable to meet these minimum requirements are still encouraged to apply and to proactively contact NFWF staff before submission. When possible, NFWF will work with potential applicants to help meet these minimum requirements. Applicants are encouraged to describe federal partner contributions in the proposal narrative, although those contributions will not count toward match except for DOD REPI funds and 638 BIA funds which count as non-federal funds for match purposes. Higher match ratios and contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged. Matching

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[2] Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories – The historically underserved farmer and rancher categories include those with limited resources, beginning farmers/ranchers, socially disadvantaged (American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, Blacks or African Americans, Native Hawaiians or other Pacific Islanders, and Hispanics) and veterans. More information on the underserved categories can be found here. The special emphasis categories are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian American, Black, Disability, Women, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Hispanic, and Veterans. More information on the special emphasis categories can be found here.

contributions may include cash, in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. In addition, eligible indirect costs (that would not be paid with requested grant funding) may be applied as match. To be eligible, matching contributions must be spent or applied during the period of performance indicated in the application. For additional guidance on match, please see Appendix 3.

PROJECT METRICS

All applications will be completed in NFWF's online Easygrants system. To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Easygrants application includes a list of standard metrics options for describing project impacts and reporting outcomes. We ask that applicants select **only the most relevant** metrics associated with the landscape level work being proposed from this list for their project (program metrics are shown in Appendix 1). If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Sydney Godbey (Sydney.Godbey@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

ELIGIBILITY

Based on legislative funding authorities, the DOI funding in this round can only support states, territories, and federally recognized Tribes.

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- **State government agencies, territories of the United States, and Indian Tribes[3]** are eligible to apply for all five grant categories.

- **Non-profit 501(c) organizations, local governments, municipal governments, non-federally recognized Tribes, and educational institutions** are eligible to apply for grants in categories (3) Sentinel Landscape Grants, (4) National Forest Grants and (5) Private Forests, Rangelands and Farmlands Grants.

Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies, businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations. For additional details on individual funders restrictions and priorities, please see Appendix 2.

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[3] The term "Indian Tribe" has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. § 5304). "Indian tribe" or "Indian Tribe" means any Indian tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Alaska Native village or regional or village corporation as defined in or established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (85 Stat. 688), which is recognized as eligible for the special programs and services provided by the United States to Indians because of their status as Indians. 25 U.S.C. § 5304(e). For more information, please see our FAQ Document.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- 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.

- Program funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.

- Federal 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.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness, and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Pre-proposals and full proposals will then be evaluated by review teams representing the relevant funders and technical experts based primarily on the extent to which they meet the five criteria listed below. Each of the criteria will be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is insufficient, 2 is significantly deficient, three is satisfactory, four is excellent and five is outstanding. For more information on review scoring see Appendix 4.

Program Goals and Priorities – Project addresses one or more of the program priorities listed on pages 2-4 of this RFP and aligns with agency funding priorities for each category as specified in Appendix 2. Project has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project progress toward goals.

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 includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise. Proposal notes any pre- and post-performance monitoring necessary and how it will be implemented. Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities. This ensures long-term sustainability and success of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions.

Conservation Plan and/or Indigenous Knowledge –Project builds off and contributes to one or more existing conservation, restoration, resilience, stewardship, or species recovery plans and/or is informed by IK. Project establishes partnerships, capacity, and/or processes necessary to develop or implement a

plan. Proposal articulates the degree to which the project will advance outcomes and goals set forth in a plan.

Partnership and Community Impact –The project is supported by a robust partnership with necessary expertise. The applicant partners with, elevates, and engages collaboratively with or directly represents diverse local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the project. These include projects where non-traditional partners or communities are engaged—or are applicants themselves—thereby benefitting underserved communities and broadening the sustained impact from the project. Efforts to develop capacity in non-traditional partners are encouraged. Projects that align with Justice40 will be prioritized.

Budget –Amount requested is proportional to expected outcomes. Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's Budget Instructions cost categories. Federally funded projects must be in compliance with 2 CRF 200 as applicable. A complete budget should include budget narratives to provide justifications for costs. 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.

OTHER

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. Tribes may utilize their own procurement policies and procedures.

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. For requests for equipment purchases, please provide sufficient justification in the budget section of the proposal.

Publicity and Acknowledgment of Support – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF's, and the federal funding partner'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 will be made as reimbursable payments or advances based on imminent need. 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. Please see 2 CFR 200.305 regarding payments.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA; state and federal), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and Clean Water Act (CWA). 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. Projects on Tribal lands must comply with all Tribal laws, regulations, and policies.

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. The costs associated with compliance with NEPA, ESA, NHPA, and CWA should be included in the overall project budget.

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.

Project Period – Projects that can be implemented faster and at scale are preferred. Project start and end dates should define the period during which all proposed work is accomplished, all requested funds are spent, and all matching funds are spent or applied. Recipients of design projects awarded through this round of ATBC are encouraged to apply for implementation-ready projects in future RFP cycles. It is important for applicants who look to phase in other implementation projects over time, to

articulate the phases in which they anticipate implementing to ensure the review panel has a complete understanding of the project breadth.

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 <u>not</u> be considered when making grant decisions. For more details, please see the tip sheet and the Uploads section of Easygrants.

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. The ATCB program is expected to have an annual application cycle.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information at www.nfwf.org/challenge.

Applicant Webinar	Wednesday, March 9, 2023, 2 PM – 4 PM ET
Pre-Proposal Due Date	Thursday, April 20, 2023, 11:59 ET
Review Period	April – May 2023
Full Proposal Due Date	Thursday, July 20, 2023, 11:59 ET
Review Period	July–November 2023
Awards Announced	November 2023

HOW TO APPLY

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

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). **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 goes through each step of the application process in Easygrants and includes detailed instruction and helpful guidance, it can be downloaded here.

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website's Applicant Information page. Including pages about required financial documents, budget narrative instructions, Easygrants mapping tool, and our indirect cost policy.

All questions on applications and agency funding priorities should be directed to NFWF. NFWF will coordinate with funding partners to answer applicant questions regarding this RFP.

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

Rachel M. Dawson (she/her)
Program Director | National Programs
Rachel.Dawson@nfwf.org

Sydney Godbey (she/her)
Program Manager | National Programs
Sydney.Godbey@nfwf.org

Blake Gardiner (he/him)
Regional Program Coordinator
Blake.Gardiner@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.

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT LEVEL METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Easygrants application includes a list of standard metrics options for describing project impacts and reporting outcomes. We ask that applicants select **only the most relevant** metrics associated with the landscape level work being proposed from this list for their project.

IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS and SENTINEL LANDSCAPE GRANTS
ALL metrics are applicable to Implementation Grants and Sentinel Landscape Grants including the ones listed below.

Habitat Restoration	
Beach habitat quality improvements - Miles restored	Enter the number of miles restored
Land restoration - Acres of trees planted	Enter # acres of TREES planted. In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), average # of trees per acre planted, and forest type (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, swamp--either broadleaf or conifer, shrub).
Land restoration - Acres restored	Enter # acres of habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow, tidal marsh, swamp, seagrass, kelp forest).
Land restoration - Acres restored on tribal lands	Enter # acres of habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow, tidal marsh, swamp, seagrass, kelp forest).
Wetland restoration - Acres restored	Enter # acres of WETLAND (not riparian or instream) habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (Marsh, Tidal marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp) and indicate % of vegetation on pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%).
Seed harvesting - lbs harvested	Enter the number of pounds of seeds collected.
Land, wetland restoration - # of native plants outplanted	Enter the # of native plants outplanted
Habitat Management	
BMP implementation for stormwater runoff - Acres with BMPs	Enter the number of acres with Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce and manage stormwater runoff. Please include size of area contributing runoff to the BMP.
Green Infrastructure - # trees planted	Enter the number of trees planted (include species, tree size, planting density and anticipated total acres of tree planting)
Green Infrastructure - access pts developed/improved	Enter the number of public access points developed/improved
Green Infrastructure - Acres of greenspace	Enter the number of acres of neighborhood green space created or improved.
Green Infrastructure - sq ft of green infrastructure	Enter the square footage of impervious surface removed or retrofitted
Improved irrigation practices - Acre feet of water conserved	Enter the number of acre feet of water conserved and indicate method of calculating water conservation in the NOTES section.
Capacity, Outreach, Incentives	
Public Access - # acres with public access	Enter the number of acres now open to public access
Public Access - # miles with public access	Enter the number of miles of stream or river opened to public access

Species-specific Strategies	
Improving migration corridors - # road crossing improvements	Enter the number of wildlife road crossings improved
Habitat Conservation	
Conservation easements - Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr). Assuming the specific parcel(s) has been identified, in the NOTES indicate what % of natural land cover would have been cleared in the absence of the easement(s).
Site protection - # of acres with enhanced protection	Use this metric for cultural site protection. Enter the number of acres with enhanced cultural site protection.

PLANNING GRANTS

All metrics listed below are also applicable to Implementation Grants and Sentinel Landscape Grants.

Habitat Management	
Improved management practices - Acres under improved management	Enter the number of acres under improved management and indicate the types of practices in the NOTES section. Only count an acre once, even if multiple activities or treatments will occur on that acre during the project.
Improved management practices - Acres under improved management on tribal lands	Enter the number of acres under improved management and indicate the types of practices in the NOTES section. Only count an acre once, even if multiple activities or treatments will occur on that acre during the project.
Project footprint - Acreage of project footprint	Enter the total number of acres impacted by one or more project conservation activities. Only count an acre once, even if multiple activities or treatments will occur on that acre during the project.
Planning, Research, Monitoring	
Management or Governance Planning - # plan activities implemented	Enter the number of management plan activities being implemented
Management or Governance Planning - # plans developed	Enter the number of plans developed that had input from multiple stakeholders
Monitoring - # monitoring programs	Enter the number of monitoring programs established or underway
Restoration planning/design/permitting - # E&D plans developed	Enter the number of Engineering and Design plans developed. Generally there will be 1 plan per project to be constructed.
Restoration planning/design/permitting - Acres restored	Enter the number of acres for which planning, design, or permitting activities are being conducted under this project.
Restoration planning/design/permitting - Miles restored	Enter the number of miles for which planning, design, or permitting activities are being conducted under this project.

NATIONAL FOREST GRANTS

All metrics listed below are also applicable to Implementation Grants and Sentinel Landscape Grants.

Habitat Restoration	
Fish passage improvements - # passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of aquatic organism passage barriers rectified. In the NOTES section indicate what type(s) of barrier(s) are being removed or replaced (e.g., culvert, dam).

Fish passage improvements - Miles of stream opened	Enter total # of miles opened to improve aquatic organism passage. Only include the miles of main stem & smaller tributaries connected until the next barrier upstream (or headwaters), but NOT lakes, ponds, or distance downstream from the barrier removed.
Floodplain restoration - Acres restored	Enter # 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 (Broadleaf, Conifer, Redwood, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp).
Instream restoration - Miles restored	Enter the number of miles restored
Riparian restoration - Miles restored	Enter total number of riparian forest miles restored. If you are restoring wetlands do NOT use this metric; use the acres of wetland restored metric.
Removal of invasives - Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored by removal or control of INVASIVE SPECIES. In the NOTES section, specify: the vegetation type being removed (herbaceous, shrub, or tree), average frequency (in years) the treatment is expected to occur in the future, and whether the removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes, No). Projects should include post-removal monitoring and follow-up control efforts as necessary to ensure that invasive species do not reinvade.
Habitat Management	
BMP implementation for prescribed burns - Acres burned	Enter # acres with prescribed burning. In the NOTES, specify if private or public land, average frequency (in yrs) for future burning, dominant vegetation burned (forest, shrubland, grassland, cropland, Phragmites marsh). If forest, note if trees have been planted in past 10 yrs (Yes, No), and type of forest (Alder-maple, Aspen-birch, Douglas-fir, Douglas-fir with high productivity and high management intensity, Elm-ash-cottonwood, Fir-spruce-mountain hemlock, Hemlock-Sitka spruce, Hemlock-Sitka spruce with high productivity, Loblolly-shortleaf pine, Loblolly-shortleaf pine with high productivity and management intensity, Lodgepole pine, Longleaf-slash pine, Longleaf-slash pine with high productivity and management intensity, Maple-beech-birch, Mixed conifer, Oak-gum-cypress, Oak-hickory, Oak-pine, Ponderosa pine, Redwood, Spruce-balsam fir, Western oak, White-red-jack pine).
Fuels management treatment (mechanical/hand) - # of acres treated	Enter # acres of vegetation treated by mechanical or hand treatments for wildfire risk reduction. In the NOTES, indicate dominant forest type, average frequency (in years) for future treatments, and whether the removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).

PRIVATE FORESTS, RANGELAND AND FARMLAND GRANTS

All metrics listed below are also applicable to Implementation Grants and Sentinel Landscape Grants.

Habitat Restoration	
Land restoration - Acres of field buffers created	Enter the # of acres of FIELD BUFFER created. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland), and the dominant vegetation being planted (Broadleaf, Conifer, Redwood, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp).
Habitat Management	
BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with BMPs	Enter the # of acres with BMPs. In the NOTES section, indicate the type of BMP(s) (e.g. agriculture and working lands BMPs) and the method of calculating reduction. DO NOT include managed grazing, use specific managed grazing metric.
Improved management practices - Acres	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., promoting plant growth above and below ground, improving wildlife habitat, and maximizing soil carbon through grazing approaches that optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including

with managed grazing	development of associated grazing infrastructure). Please describe the grazing practices in the NOTES section.
BMP implementation for fencing improvements - Miles of fencing improved	Enter the number of miles of fencing improved
BMP implementation for fencing improvements - Miles of fencing removed	Enter the number of miles of fencing removed
BMP implementation for fencing improvements - Miles of corridor reconnected	Enter the number of miles of migration corridor reconnected. Do not double count with miles of stream opened.
All Capacity, Outreach, Incentives metrics shown below	

ALL GRANT CATEGORIES

Capacity, Outreach, Incentives	
Building institutional capacity - # of orgs contributing to goals	Enter the number of organizations contributing to the initiative's conservation goals
Economic benefits - # jobs created	Enter the number of new jobs created. If applicable, in the NOTES section report the number of new jobs created for people in the Historically Underserved, Tribal or Special Emphasis categories.
Economic benefits - # jobs sustained	Enter the number of jobs sustained. If applicable, in the NOTES section report the number of jobs sustained for people in the Historically Underserved, Tribal, or Special Emphasis categories.
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # internships/fellowships	Enter the number of people employed as interns, fellows, or youth corps participants.
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached	Enter the number of people who responded to an offer of outreach, training, or technical assistance. This number should be a subset of the # of people targeted. In the NOTES, if applicable, note the number of people in the Historically Underserved, Tribal or Special Emphasis categories.
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people targeted	Enter the number of people targeted by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities. In the NOTES, if applicable, note the number of people in the Historically Underserved, Tribal, or Special Emphasis categories.
Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # workshops, webinars, meetings	Enter the number of workshops, webinars, and meetings held to address project activity
Volunteer participation - # of volunteer hours	Enter the # of volunteer hours in this project, who will be engaged, and what activities they will complete.

APPENDIX 2: AGENCY FUNDING DETAILS

Department of Defense

The Department of Defense (DOD) is providing $5 million to fund projects that support the goals of an existing [Sentinel Landscape](#), advance conservation goals in the Pacific, or address installation-level off-base species, habitat goals, and climate resilience. Pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2684a(h), this funding may be counted as "non-federal" matching funds for the project. Projects must meet the requirements of this RFP and propose a project *in the vicinity of or ecologically related to,* a military installation or military airspace, and/or to maintain or enhance the climate resilience of one or more military installations. DOD funds *cannot* be used to support projects directly on military lands (i.e., "inside the fence line" of the DOD installation or range). The proposal narrative should clearly describe the encroachment challenges, environmental hazards or resource concerns that threaten the military mission, the conservation or nature-based solution proposed to address those threats, and how the project will maintain and improve military resilience and directly benefit defense mission capabilities of the DOD installation or landscape the project is associated with. Applications involving military installation projects should provide evidence demonstrating coordination with the appropriate military installation(s) or sentinel landscape.

Department of the Interior

Funding from the Department of the Interior (DOI) can only be awarded to state government agencies, territories of the United States, and federally recognized Indian Tribal governments for implementing voluntary ecosystem restoration projects on public and private land, with a priority for cross-boundary projects. Other entities are encouraged to partner with states, territories, and federally recognized Indian Tribal governments as subrecipients of a larger project they submit. Approximately, $100 million of DOI funding will be made available to support projects that advance the goals of this RFP and align with existing or developing landscape or species conservation plan.

U.S. Forest Service

U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is providing at least $10 million to advance the goals of Challenge program. This funding will support collaborative-based landscape-scale restoration projects on National Forest System lands to achieve the restoration of a forest ecosystem through the removal of vegetation, the use of prescribed fire, or the decommissioning of an unauthorized, temporary, or system road. Projects completing vegetation management should be connected to a watershed protection plan. Applicants should consider discussing their project with the National Forest their project will benefit prior to submission.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is providing $1 million of technical assistance funding through this RFP to support to support outreach and engagement with private landowners to advance voluntary conservation efforts on working lands that align with NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife frameworks or initiatives, and especially increase Working Lands for Wildlife participation among farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners in the Historically Underserved and Special Emphasis categories. NRCS is also committed to aligning additional financial assistance funds through its state offices to projects that advance the goals of the America the Beautiful Challenge. Applications involving private lands should be shared with the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist for input and guidance before submission. A list of NRCS state contacts can be found [here](#).

APPENDIX 3: MATCH REQUIREMENTS

The non-Federal match required for a recipient to be eligible under this program varies by recipient type, and the source of funds, as follows:

Matching Funds
Non-federal match helps demonstrate broad support for the project and may be required for federal funding. The following is the minimum match (in-kind and cash) requirements for potential applicants:

DOI Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
States	90% of total project costs	10% of total project costs (11% of grant request), of which at least 2.5% must be cash
~~Tribal Nations & territories*~~	~~97% of costs~~	~~3% of costs, of which at least .75% must be cash~~ (COVERED for Tribal Nations, fully covered by partnership with Native Americans in Philanthropy; WAIVED for territories per DOI legal interpretation, see below)*

DOD Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All entities	100% of costs	Not required. DOD REPI Program funds can serve as a non-federal match for the other federal programs in the ATBC grants.

USFS Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All entities	80% of total project costs	20% of total project costs (24% of grant request) (COVERED for Tribal Nations, fully covered by Native Americans in Philanthropy)*

NRCS Technical Assistance Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All entities	50% of total project costs	50% of total project costs (equal to grant request)** (COVERED for Tribal Nations, fully covered by Native Americans in Philanthropy)*

*Pursuant to Section 601 of Pub. L. 96-205, as amended, the match requirement is waived for the territories of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP), as a part of their partnership with NFWF, will be providing all match for any granted Tribally led projects up to the 10% ATBC funding set aside for Tribal Nation grantees. Match for Tribally led projects funded beyond the 10% will be subject to NAP funding availability. Tribally led applications can leave the matching contributions section of Easygrants blank, NFWF will be able to tag NAP funds to applicable projects on the back end. If there is match that an applicant would like to include, you are still able to do so in Easygrants, but it is not required.

** Organizations relevant to any of NRCS's Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories other than Tribes that are unable to meet the 1:1 non-federal matching contribution requirement are eligible to receive grant funding, but they must contact NFWF to discuss potential match adjustment options prior to submitting a proposal.

The non-federal share of eligible recipient award costs must include cash **that meets or exceeds** the percentages shown above. The match requirements may be met in all or in part by contributions from a third party, including in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. Recipients may also voluntarily attribute some or all of their allowable indirect costs as matching funds; however, you may only charge to the award the indirect costs calculated against the allowable direct costs charged to the award.

The uniform requirements for matching funds are described in 2 CFR 200.306. Match contributions must be necessary and reasonable for accomplishment of project or program objectives. To be allowable, the recipient's funds and all third-party contributions, including cash and in-kind contributions, must meet the requirements in 2 CFR 200.306. The value of third-party in-kind contributions must be determined in accordance with the standards in 2 CFR 200.306.

Federal partner contributions, besides DOD REPI funds and 638 BIA funds, do not qualify to be used as match under this program. However, applicants should identify any Federal partners and their contributions to the project in the project narrative, as those partnerships show support for this program's priority for collaborative projects.

Applicants who are unable to meet these minimum requirements are still encouraged to apply and to proactively contact NFWF staff before submission. Where possible, NFWF will work with potential applicants to help meet these minimum requirements.

APPENDIX 4: EVALUATION CRITERIA – BENCHMARKS AND REVIEW PROCESS

Following is the process that will be used to review proposals and determine final awards.

First, every ATBC proposal will be evaluated by a minimum of three reviewers (usually five or more), including at least one NFWF program staff member, at least one external, technical expert, and at least one representative from an ATBC funding agency partner. All reviewers agree to comply with a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality policy and receive training on reviewing proposals.

Proposals will be reviewed, evaluated, and scored based on the extent to which they meet the criteria of the five categories below, which correspond to the evaluation criteria listed in the ATBC RFP and the questions in the proposal sections and narrative. Reviewers consider the degree to which the proposals align with these criteria when determining the score for each category and provide written comments on their assessments. Each of the criteria will be evaluated on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is insufficient, 2 is significantly deficient, three is satisfactory, four is excellent and five is outstanding. The benchmarks below that are associated with the criteria are intended as a guide for reviewers and applicants may consider them when preparing their proposals. It is important to note that a score of 1 or 2 for any individual criterion can result in a proposal being turned down for funding regardless of high scores in other categories.

Once all of the proposals are reviewed based on the extent to which they meet the five criteria, final funding decisions will be based on proposal scoring as well as additional factors applied to the overall slate of funded projects, which may include: geographic distribution of projects, variety of ATBC program priorities addressed, representation of project type and applicant, alignment with available funding, and performance on prior and/or current NFWF grants.

Program Goals and Priorities	
Scale	**Description**
1	Project does not address program priorities nor does it align with agency funding priorities.
2	Project somewhat addresses one program priority but does not align with agency funding priorities. Project lacks specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success.
3	Project addresses one or more program priorities and aligns somewhat with agency funding priorities. Project has at least one specific, quantifiable performance metric to evaluate project success.
4	Project addresses two or more program priorities and aligns with agency funding priorities. Project has more than one specific, quantifiable performance metric to evaluate project success.
5	Project addresses three or more program priorities and aligns with agency funding priorities. Project has multiple specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success.
Technical Merit	
1	Significant concern that project is not technically sound or feasible as proposed. The proposal omits a work plan or timeline. Project does not engage technical experts in planning, design, and/or implementation. For Planning proposals, the applicant omits information on how proposed work will lead to other projects.
2	Some concern that project may not be technically sound and feasible. The proposal includes a limited work plan and timeline. Project negligibly engages technical experts in planning, design, and implementation. For Planning proposals, the applicant notes that efforts may lead to other projects but does not justify the assertion.
3	Project is likely technically sound and feasible but lacks sufficient detail. The proposal includes a basic work plan and timeline. Project engages technical some experts in project planning, design, and implementation. For Planning proposals, the applicant includes basic information on how efforts could lead to other projects.
4	Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear work plan and timeline but some details are questionable. Project engages technical experts in project planning, design, and implementation. For Planning proposals, the applicant demonstrates how efforts will lead to implementation projects, but some justification is unclear.
5	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. For Planning proposals, the applicant clearly and logically demonstrates how efforts will lead to implementation projects.

	Conservation Plan or Indigenous Knowledge
1	Project is entirely unrelated to an existing conservation, restoration, resilience, stewardship, or recovery plan, nor is it informed by Indigenous Knowledge (IK). Proposal does not include or explain current capacity, partnerships, and/or processes necessary to develop or implement a plan.
2	Project is somewhat related to one existing conservation, restoration, resilience, stewardship, or recovery plan or includes basic incorporation of IK. Proposal notes but does not describe current capacity, partnerships, and/or processes necessary to develop or implement a plan.
3	Project contributes to one existing conservation, restoration, resilience, stewardship, or recovery plan or is meaningfully informed by IK. Proposal describes how project utilizes capacity, partnerships, and/or processes necessary to develop or implement a plan. Proposal articulates the degree to which the project activities are connected to outcomes and goals set forth in a plan.
4	Project contributes significantly to one or more existing conservation, restoration, resilience, stewardship, or recovery plans or is meaningfully informed by and incorporates IK. Proposal describes how project ensures capacity, partnerships, and/or processes necessary to develop or implement a plan. Proposal articulates the degree to which the project will advance outcomes and goals set forth in a plan(s).
5	Project meaningfully advances one or more existing conservation, restoration, resilience, stewardship, or recovery plans or is wholly guided by IK. Proposal describes how project establishes and adaptively manages capacity, partnerships, and/or processes necessary to develop or implement a plan. Proposal articulates outcomes and goals set forth in a plan(s) that will be achieved.
	Partnership and Community Impact
1	The project is not supported by a partnership or lacks capacity. The applicant does not engage or contribute to the capacity of local community members, leaders and other relevant or impacted stakeholders.
2	The project appears to be supported by a partnership with sufficient capacity, but proposal lacks details. The applicant acknowledges but does not engage local community members, leaders and other relevant stakeholders in the project. Project does not develop capacity in non-traditional partners, engage an underserved community, uplift Tribal and Indigenous led efforts, or boost the conservation workforce (e.g., AmeriCorps and 21st Century Conservation Service Corps).
3	The project is supported by a narrow but adequate partnership. The applicant informs, partners with, and engages with some local community members, leaders, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the project. Project is likely to do one of the following: develops capacity in non-traditional partners, engages an underserved community, uplifts Tribal and Indigenous led efforts, and/or develops the conservation workforce (e.g., AmeriCorps and 21st Century Conservation Service Corps).

4	The project is supported by a comprehensive partnership with necessary expertise and capacity. The applicant partners with, elevates, and engages collaboratively with diverse local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the project but may omit some key constituencies. Project directly engages non-traditional partners or underserved communities and broadens the sustained impact from the project. Project is likely to do more than one of the following: develops capacity in non-traditional partners, uplifts Tribal and Indigenous led efforts, and/or develops the conservation workforce (e.g., AmeriCorps and 21st Century Conservation Service Corps).
5	The project is supported by a robust partnership with necessary expertise and capacity. The applicant partners with, elevates, and engages collaboratively with or directly represents diverse local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the project. Project engages non-traditional partners or communities—or are applicants themselves—thereby broadening the sustained impact from the project. Project develops capacity in non-traditional partners, uplifts Tribal and Indigenous led efforts, and/or develops the restoration workforce (i.e. AmeriCorps and 21st Century Conservation Service Corps).
**Budget**
1	Amount requested is not proportionate to proposed outcomes and project is not cost-effective. Costs are not allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's Budget Instructions cost categories. Match is insufficient. Costs are not justified.
2	Amount requested does not seem proportionate to proposed outcomes and project is likely not cost-effective. Some costs are allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's Budget Instructions cost categories. The budget does not include enough detail to determine overall cost effectiveness. Match contributions are unclear. The costs are not reasonable for the area where work is being performed and for the tasks being proposed.
3	Amount requested is somewhat proportionate to proposed outcomes. Costs are mostly allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's Budget Instructions cost categories. The budget includes some details, but overall cost effectiveness is unclear. Match contributions are likely sufficient but lack details. The costs are somewhat reasonable for the area where work is being performed and for the tasks being proposed.
4	Amount requested is proportionate to proposed outcomes. Costs are allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's Budget Instructions cost categories. The budget includes sufficient details to assess overall cost effectiveness. Match is sufficient and most details are clear. The costs are largely reasonable for the area where work is being performed and for the tasks being proposed.
5	Amount requested is proportionate to proposed outcomes. Costs are allowable, reasonable, and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's Budget Instructions cost categories. The budget includes robust detail enabling a clear picture of overall cost effectiveness. Match is sufficient, detailed, and fully eligible. Costs are reasonable for the area where work is being performed and for the tasks being proposed. The budget and match include sufficient detail and justification to instill confidence that proposed outcomes will be achieved.