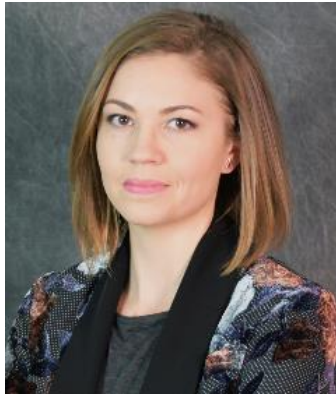


# U.S. Territory Applicant Webinar 2023 America the Beautiful Challenge

*Dedicated to investing in ecosystem and watershed restoration projects, resilience, equitable access, workforce development, corridors and connectivity, and collaborative conservation*

# Your NFWF Team



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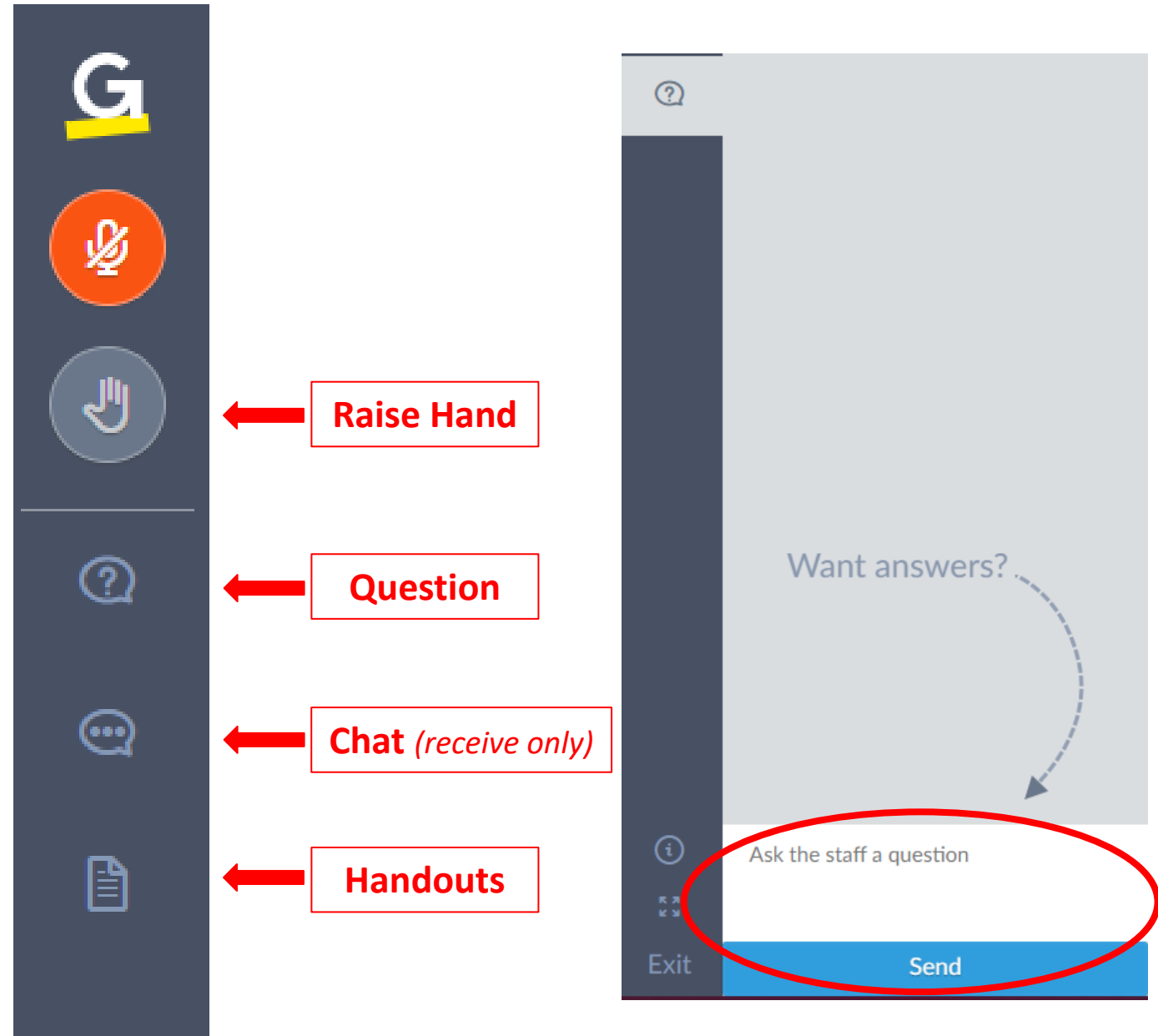
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# Webinar Instructions

- To improve sound quality, all participants will be muted for the duration of the webinar. If you want to ask a question you have two options:
  1. Enter your query where it says “Enter a question for staff” and click send. A NFWF staff member will type a response or read your question aloud when we pause for Q&A.
  2. Write it down and contact us after the webinar. We have a lot of material to cover, so you may prefer to have a more in-depth discussion later.
- We may ask you to raise your “hand” in the webinar dialogue box to confirm participants can hear us.
- If you experience a technical glitch, please type it into the question box, since we can’t hear you. (We may not know about the glitch unless you say something!)

*The webinar will be available for download next week at [www.nfwf.org/challenge](http://www.nfwf.org/challenge)*



# General Session Agenda

Introduction to NFWF

Program Context and Priorities

2022 Outcomes and Grants

Review of Request for Proposals

*Five Grant Categories*

*Evaluation and Guidelines*

Frequently Asked Questions

Q&A

Using Easygrants



# Introduction to NFWF

## WHO WE ARE

- Chartered by Congress in 1984
- 30 member Board appointed by Secretary of the Interior
  - Includes FWS Director & NOAA Administrator

## WHAT WE DO

- Sustain, restore, enhance the nation's natural heritage
- Support collaboration among federal agencies & private funders
- Create common ground among diverse interests

## HOW WE DO IT

- Leverage private money with public funding – average 3:1
- On-the-ground conservation projects through competitive grant making

### NFWF IS

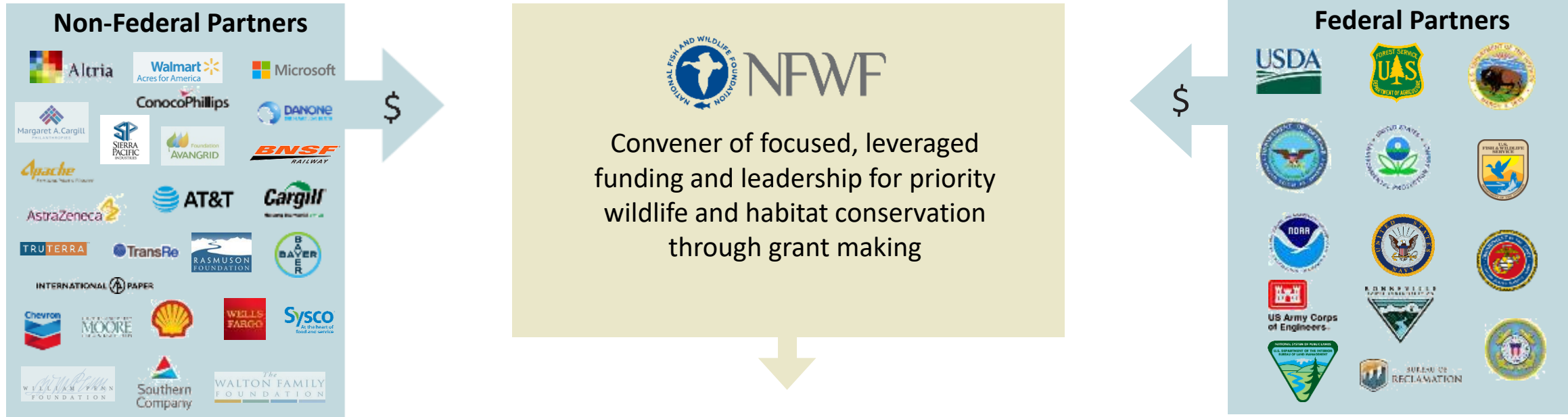
- An implementer – we fund projects

### NFWF IS NOT

- An advocacy or litigation organization and does not fund these activities



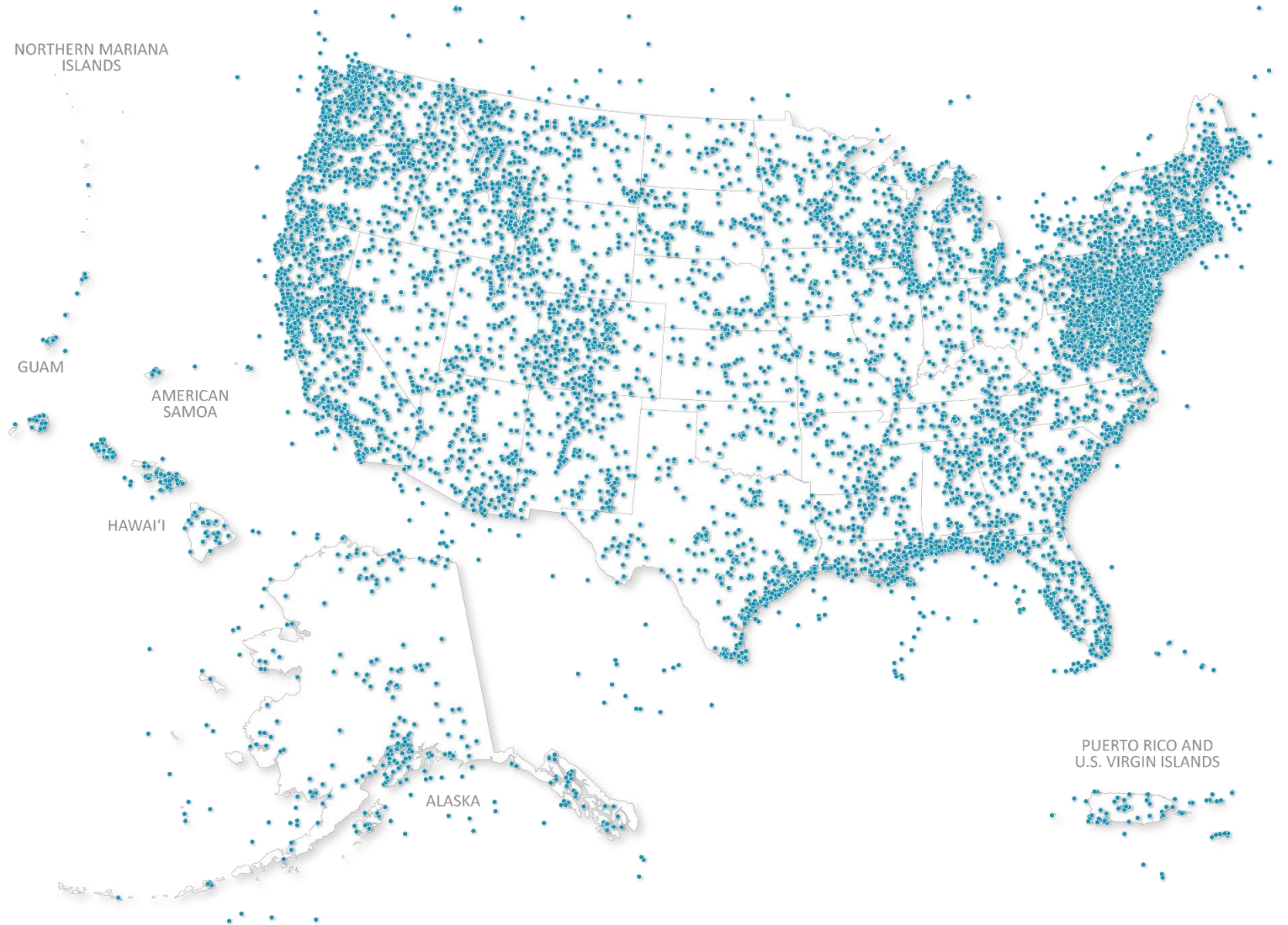
# Public-Private Partnerships



## 6,000+ Implementing Partners



# NFWF Conservation Investments (1984 – 2022)



- **21,680 Investments**
- **6,000+ Organizations**
- **All 50 states**



**NFWF**

# What is the Challenge Program?

- A one-stop-shop for implementers to easily access federal conservation funding from multiple agencies
- An opportunity for public-private partnerships to further leverage federal investments
- A means to deliver infrastructure related conservation funding on the ground in a fast manner
- A way to pool federal agency funding and expertise to support locally-led, cross-boundary, multi-state, and/or landscape-scale restoration projects
- A five-year program, 2023 will be the second annual RFP



- *A minimum of 3% of the 2023 funding will be awarded to U.S. Territories*



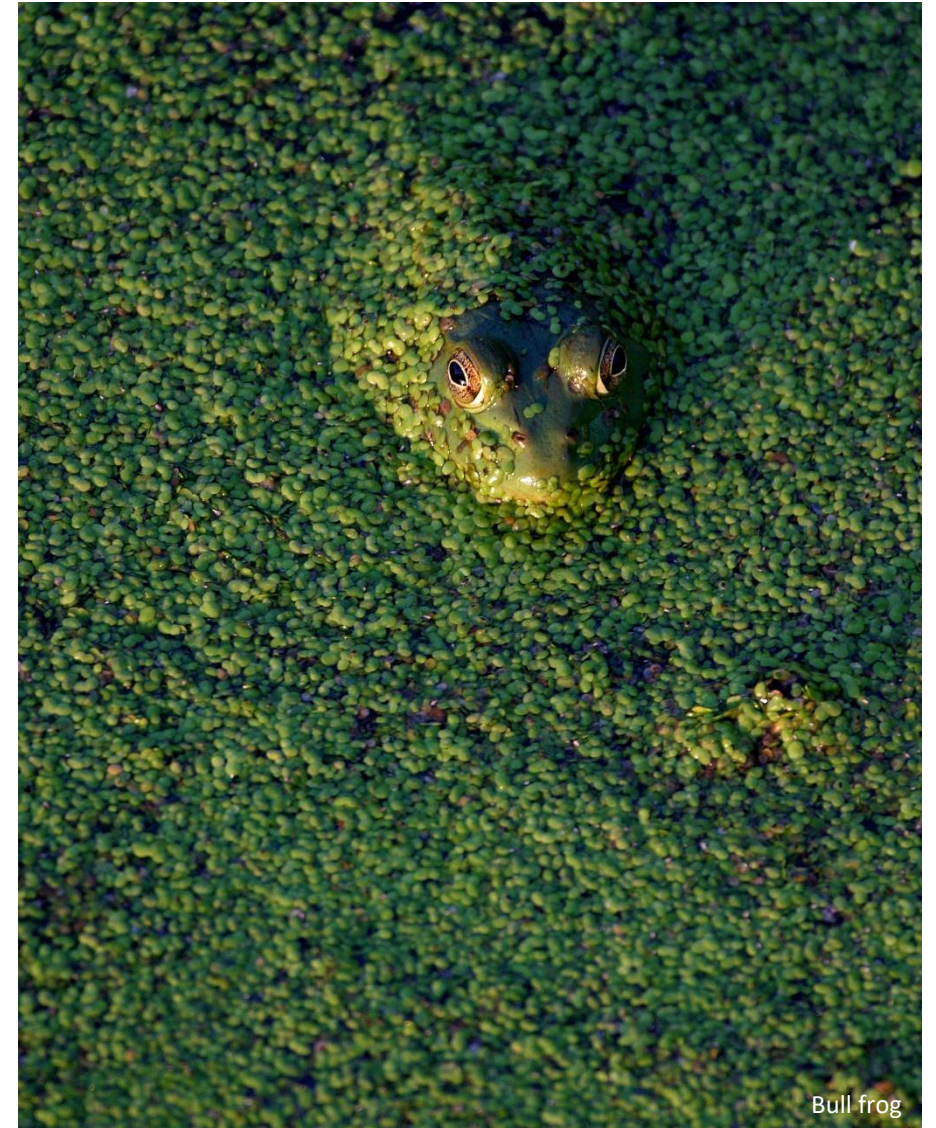
# Overarching Program Themes

1. Conserving and restoring rivers, coasts, wetlands and watersheds
2. Conserving and restoring forests, grasslands and other 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



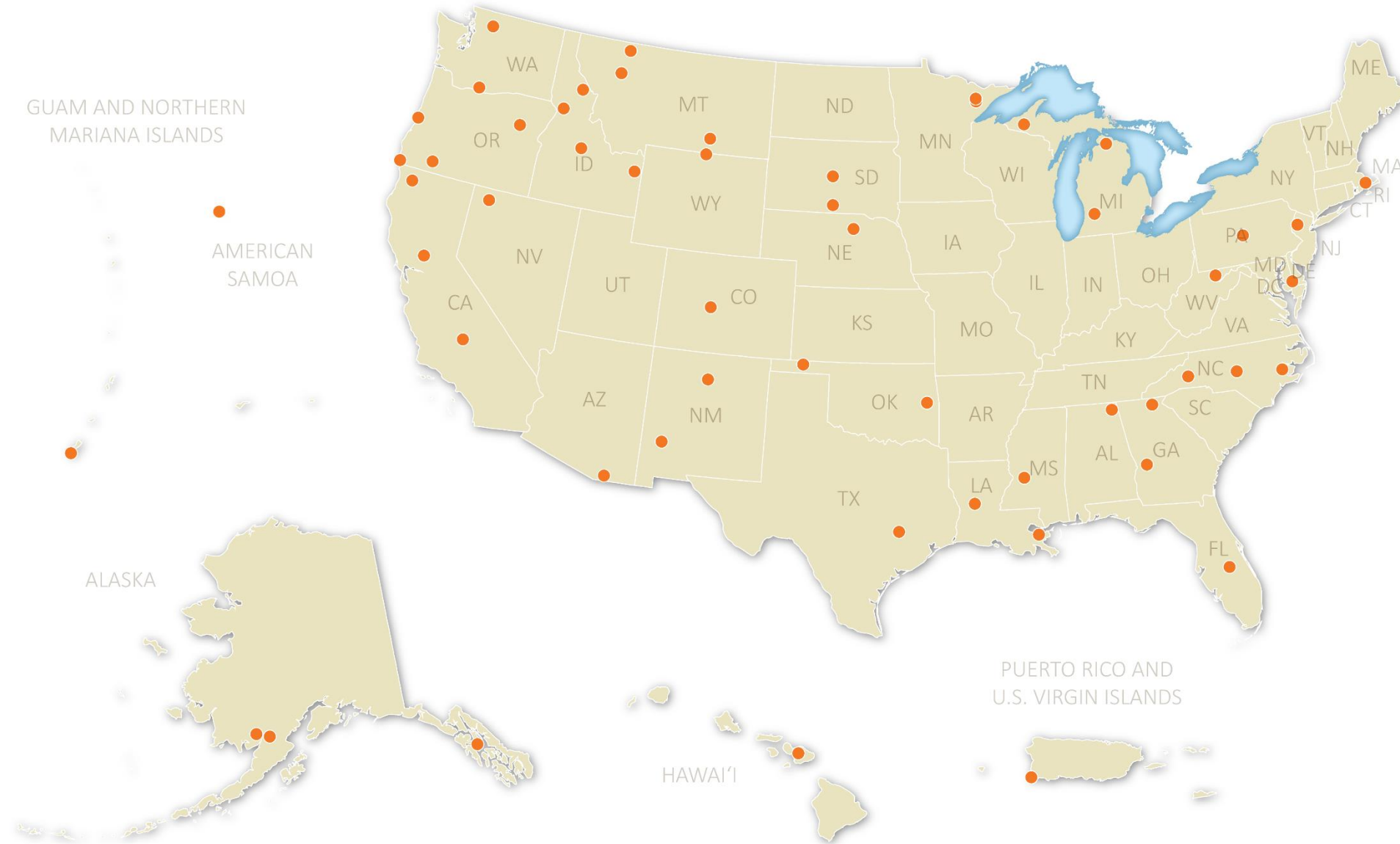
# Program Priorities

- Benefit At-Risk Fish, Wildlife and Plant Species
- Expand Habitat Connectivity
- Provide a Range of Ecosystem Services
- Strengthen Ecosystem and Community Resilience
- Expand Public and Community Access to Nature
- Engage Local Communities
- Support Tribally Led Conservation and Restoration Priorities
- Contribute to Local or Tribal Economies
- Contribute to Workforce Development
- Advance Sentinel Landscape Partnership Priorities



Bull frog

# 2022 by the Numbers



## Applicants

- \$1.1 billion
- 527 proposals
- All 50 states, DC and 3 U.S. Territories
- 133 Tribal Nations

## Grantees

- \$91 Million
- 55 proposals
- 45 states and 3 U.S. Territories
- 14 Tribal Nations

# 2022 Territory Grants

## Swains Island Tropical Ecosystem Restoration and Invasive Species Management Planning (AS)

American Samoa Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources

*Engage community stakeholders and collaborate with conservation experts to identify opportunities and build capacity for tropical restoration and invasive species management on Swain's Island. Project will create an operational and reforestation plan for long-term protection that supports at-risk terrestrial and marine species and re-establishes native flora on the 460-acre island to benefit the entire island ecosystem.*

## Integrated Habitat Enhancement Initiative to Benefit Native Species and Local Communities (GU)

Guam Department of Agriculture

*Enhance 100 acres of low-value habitat to reduce hazardous wildfire fuel loads, thin acacia nurse trees, underplant native vegetation, and continue a community-backed restoration and resilience project in the village of Malessu, Guam. The project will implement upland restoration to improve habitat for at-risk species and mitigate impacts of floods and fires, which ultimately protects nearshore marine habitats from severe erosion and sedimentation.*

# Grant Categories



**Funding:** \$100M for categories one and two – total available this year

**Eligible:** States, Territories, and federally recognized Tribes

**Geographic Focus:** National

**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.

- 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

# Grant Categories Continued



**Funding:** \$100M for categories one and two – total available this year

**Eligible:** States, Territories, and federally recognized Tribes

**Geographic Focus:** National

**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.

- Size: \$200,000 to \$2 million
- Length: up to 3 years

# Grant Categories Continued



**Funding:** \$5 million available this year

**Eligible:** Non-profits, local municipal governments, and educational institutions, States, U.S. territories, and non-federally recognized and federally recognized Tribes

**Geographic Focus:** Sentinel Landscapes, Pacific, or off-base species/habitat goals

**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.

- Size: \$250,000 to \$1.5 million
- Length: 2 to 4 years

# Grant Categories Continued



**Funding:** \$10M available this year

**Eligible:** Non-profits, local municipal governments, and educational institutions, States, U.S. territories, and non-federally recognized and federally recognized Tribes

**Geographic Focus:** National Forest system lands

**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.

- Size: \$250,000 to \$1.5 million
- Length: 2 to 4 years



# Grant Categories Continued



**Funding:** \$1 million available this year

**Eligible:** Non-profits, local, municipal governments, and educational institutions States, U.S. territories, and non-federally recognized and federally recognized Tribes

**Geographic Focus:** Private lands with a focus on implementing Working Lands for Wildlife Frameworks and Initiatives

**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).

➤ Size: \$200,000 to \$500,000

➤ Length: 2 to 3 years

# Matching Requirements

## DOI Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
States	90% of costs	10% of costs (11% of grant request), at least 2.5% must be cash
Tribes & Territories	97% of costs	<del>3% of costs, at least .75% must be cash</del>

## DoD Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All Entities	100% of costs	Not required

## USFS Conservation and Restoration Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All Entities	80% of costs	20% of costs (24% of grant request)

## NRCS Technical Assistance Funds

Recipient Type	Federal cost share	Non-federal cost share
All Entities	50% of costs	50% of costs (equal to grant request)

# Overall Evaluation Criteria

## All Proposals:

- Program Goals and Priorities
- Technical Merit
- Conservation Plan and/or Indigenous Knowledge
- Partnership and Community Impact
- Budget

See Appendix 4 for more details!



# Federal Funding Compliance Implications and Requirements

- ATBC projects will 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)
- Acquisition included in projects may be subject to requirements under Federal acquisition regulations and Yellow Book standards. Agency approval and reporting may be required.
- Contractors and subcontractors in budgets may be subject to prevailing wage requirements
- Materials and supplies may be subject to Buy American requirements
- *Be sure to budget time and resources towards completing these requirements and obtaining all necessary permits and clearances*

# Overall Proposal Guidelines - Highlights

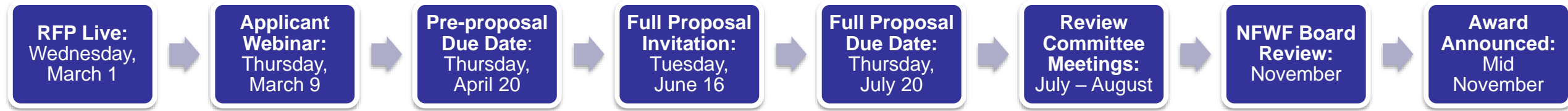


- Project periods of performance cannot start prior to August 1, 2023 or end after June 30, 2028
- If you haven't thought about permits and compliance yet, START NOW!
- Start collecting your letters of support (write templates for your partners)

## Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds:

- Support of ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements
- Support of political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations

# Program Timeline



# Applicant Assistance Opportunities and Resources

- Full RFP and supporting materials are available on our website
  - Tip sheet for help navigating RFP and Easygrants
  - Frequently Asked Questions living document
- Pre-Proposal lab sessions with NFWF staff March – April 20<sup>th</sup>
  - Intended only for discussion of specific project concepts and ideas; please send general RFP and program inquiries via email
- Applicants submit pre-proposal through Easygrants portal – Due April 20<sup>th</sup>
  - [easygrants@nfwf.org](mailto:easygrants@nfwf.org) for help with Easygrants issues
- Webinar recording will be posted to website
- NFWF staff and Field Liaisons are available to assist



**Please email us if you have any questions!**

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NFWF

# Field Liaison Support

NFWF is contracting with [Native American Fish and Wildlife Society](#) and [Sundance Consulting](#) to provide ATBC applicants and grantees with additional assistance

FIELD LIAISON CONTACT	EMAIL	SECTOR EXPERTISE
Sundance	<a href="mailto:ATBC_Support@sundance-inc.net">ATBC_Support@sundance-inc.net</a>	All Sectors





# Frequently Asked Question – 1

**Q: Is land acquisition or conservation easement eligible under this program?**

**A:** The focus of the 2023 ATBC is on implementing restoration priorities identified in established or new conservation plans, broader ongoing restoration efforts and/or projects that are informed by Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and promote Tribal co-stewardship. Voluntary acquisition and easement projects are not excluded, but to be competitive the application would need to demonstrate how the acquisition or easement is critical to the overall landscape restoration and stewardship work being conducted. Land acquisition and conservation easement proposals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis — particularly with respect to the conservation and restoration outcomes that can be delivered, the degree to which they incorporate a public access component, and the overall cost effectiveness of the proposed approach, among the other evaluation criteria detailed in the RFP. Only grant categories 1 and 3 allow for land acquisition. This type of transaction would require an appraisal and compliance with federal acquisition rules, and the details of the particular project may affect the type of appraisal needed.

*In short, acquisition or easement could be a means to achieving a broader conservation goal, but not the goal of the project itself.*

*An example would be protecting land within a high priority migration corridor as part of a broader effort to improve the overall health and functionality of that corridor.*

## Frequently Asked Question – 2

**Q:** Can multiple organizations submit a joint application for one project?

**A:** Yes, we encourage applicants to bring together broad partnerships in support of the project. However, the application can only have one primary applicant organization, and the point of contact on Easygrants (NFWF's grant-management software) must be directly affiliated with the applicant organization. If awarded, all funding will flow through the applicant organization, which will be responsible for managing subawards to any project partners. If applicants would prefer to or need to apply separately for the same project, they should be sure to reference the co-proposal(s) in the corresponding proposal narrative question.



## Frequently Asked Question – 3



**Q:** Can an organization submit more than one application for this RFP?

**A:** Yes, more than one application may be submitted, but please note that anything beyond two or three submissions per grant category may see diminished competitiveness. We generally encourage applicants to submit the one or two of their best projects per RFP grant category. Please do not submit the same project to multiple categories — select only the most appropriate one. If submitting multiple proposals, please indicate priorities if any.

## Frequently Asked Question – 4

**Q:** What if you have a project idea for the implementation or planning, collaboration, and engagement grant categories, but you aren't an eligible applicant?

**A:** Ineligible applicants for these two grant categories are encouraged to partner with eligible applicants (states, territories, and federally recognized Tribes). Subawards and subcontracts to NGOs, associations, state recognized Tribes, counties/municipalities, land trusts, and others are allowed for all four grant categories.



Corals, Northern Mariana Islands

## Frequently Asked Question – 5



**Q:** What sort of information should be included in project context?

**A:** While NFWF, our funding partners, and our proposal reviewers have extensive conservation and restoration expertise, they may not know the context of your particular project. Please do make every effort to tell us why this is the right time for this project, why these are the right actions to take, and why it should happen in this geography. Also describe any additional plans (Indigenous Knowledge, municipal, federal, state, etc) and goals this project helps deliver—but do not upload each of those full plans with your proposal (you may provide links). If you are submitting a proposal for planning, collaboration, or capacity building, please be sure to clearly characterize the final project vision and what implementation will achieve/benefit.

## Frequently Asked Question – 6

**Q:** Can we request funding for planning, collaboration, engagement and capacity building activities? What if my project is doing both implementation and planning?

**A:** Yes, activities associated with planning, collaboration, engagement, and capacity building are eligible. It will be helpful to show what initial steps are already underway and what partners and/or impacted communities have offered support or buy-in. Be sure to articulate the ultimate potential and vision for the effort. Giving reviewers the full picture—in addition to describing the activities for which funding is requested—will be helpful. If your project includes a combination of planning and implementation, try to apply to the category that best fits the scope of work and clearly describe each part and how they work together in a seamless effort. If the planning and implementation work does not fit together, then they should be submitted as two separate projects.



## Frequently Asked Question – 7

**Q:** Can you clarify what you mean by capacity building? Will you fund staff positions to help deliver conservation and restoration?

**A:** We are open to a wide variety of capacity building activities as it relates to increasing the capacity of an organization or collaborative network to deliver on-the-ground restoration or conservation that aligns with the program priorities. In terms of funding full-time positions, while this is an eligible use of funds and budgets should be constructed to adequately reflect what's needed to deliver the project, be aware that full or partial funding of a staff position is not guaranteed after the end date of your project. Be sure to include context on the need for the position and how it will be sustained post-award.



# Frequently Asked Question – 8

**Q:** How is ATBC different from NFWF's National Coastal Resilience Fund (NCRF)?

**A:** While NCRF and ATBC are both national programs with an emphasis on resilience, ATBC is not limited to funding only in coastal areas or only on flooding/coastal resilience. In general, if the project is primarily focused on coastal resilience and aligned strongly with the NCRF program priorities listed in the [NCRF RFP](#), then you should apply only to NCRF. The NCRF and ATBC teams will coordinate together during the proposal review process to ensure any proposals that should be considered in the other program are identified.







## Frequently Asked Question – 9

**Q:** We have privacy concerns when it comes to submitting a pre-proposal. How will the data provided in the proposal be used and distributed?

**A:** The Foundation will not share identifying information about any particular entity or project and proposal content will be kept confidential. All reviewers are subject to a confidentiality clause in order to participate and are not allowed to share any proposal details outside of their own personal review.

# Final Tips for Applicants

1. Print/download the tip sheet and use it as a reference
2. Re-read the RFP and reference the linked-information provided
3. These are competitive grants; projects should address all criteria, respond to all requirements and have a “wow” factor
4. Include lots of context and details—do not assume reviewers know about or understand your project!
5. Submit your pre-proposal ON OR BEFORE April 20<sup>th</sup>
6. **Note that NFWF staff will not be in the office at 11:59 pm on April 20<sup>th</sup>!**
7. Reach out if you need help

## RESOURCES:

- Tip Sheet
- Bookings Link (Proposal Lab)
- Webinar Recording
- FAQ Document
- Letters of Support Guide
- Quick Reference Guide
- NFWF Staff
- Field Liaisons



# Questions?

**Pre-proposals are Due  
Thursday, April 20<sup>th</sup>!!**

Full Proposals invited June 16

Awards will be announced in  
November

[www.nfwf.org/challenge](http://www.nfwf.org/challenge)

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# How to Apply to NFWF – Easygrants System

[easygrants.nfwf.org](http://easygrants.nfwf.org)

1. Log in with existing email and password
  - Register now if you do not have one – this will allow for time to familiarize yourself with the system
  - If you have trouble logging in, use the help feature
2. Turn off your pop-up blockers
3. Download and use the tip sheet available on the program webpage
4. You can work on the narrative offline – download the template and upload when you're finished
5. Please be as specific as possible with mapping AND providing location information on your project
6. Click save frequently
7. Make sure all your check marks are green; do not click SUBMIT until you are completely finished





# [www.nfwf.org/challenge](http://www.nfwf.org/challenge)

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