

## *SOUTHEAST AQUATICS FUND*

### 2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar: **Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 3:30 pm ET** [[REGISTER](#)]

~~Full Proposal Due Date — Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 11:59 pm ET~~

**Full Proposal Due Date Thursday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 11:59 pm ET**

### OVERVIEW

To help conserve habitats for aquatic species, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to restore watershed habitats and improve water quality in targeted river basins and watersheds of the Southeast. The Southeast Aquatics Fund is a competitive grants program that supports watershed-based restoration and improved management within riparian and in-stream habitat and the connected upland areas. The goal is to improve the health of aquatic systems and secure populations of native freshwater aquatic species. By promoting a habitat-based approach, a diversity of species benefit, from game species to at-risk species, ultimately helping reduce the risk of future listings under the Endangered Species Act.

This effort is a public-private partnership with funding provided by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southern Company, Cargill and the Altria Group. Approximately \$2.6 million is anticipated to be available in grant funding in 2023, with individual grant awards typically ranging between \$150,000 and \$450,000.

### GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Geographic focal areas and funding priorities for the Southeast Aquatics Fund are informed by:

- The [Longleaf Forests and Rivers Business Plan](#), which outlines NFWF's goals and strategies for freshwater habitat restoration and enhancement within priority watersheds in the southeastern U.S. A suite of aquatic species were selected as indicators of healthy freshwater habitat in certain prioritized watersheds in Alabama and Georgia, including the bridled and trispot darters, Alabama rainbow, Coosa creekshell, Black Warrior waterdog and flattened musk turtle. Please refer to the description of the specific watersheds

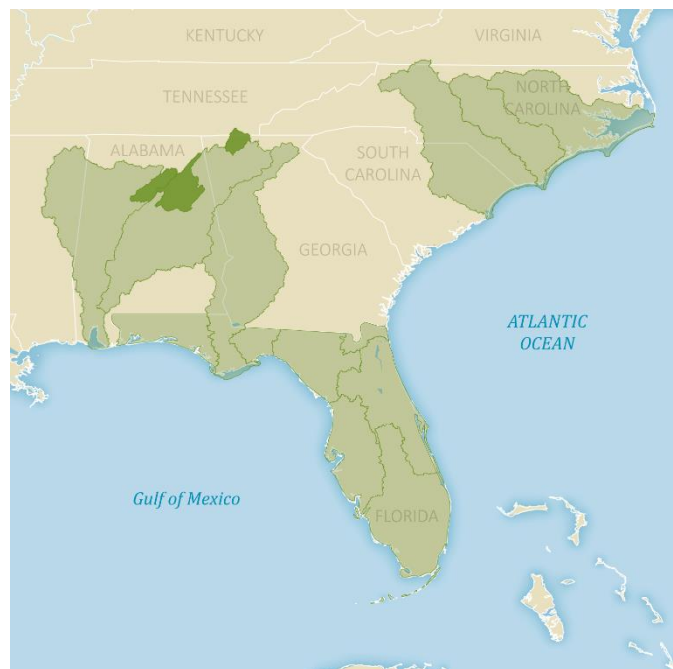


Figure 1: Southeast Aquatics Fund Program Boundaries

and associated focal species in the section below.

- The Southeastern Aquatic Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (<http://southeastfreshwater.org/>) completed in 2016 by the University of Georgia River Basin Center and Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute. This science-based, systematic assessment identified watersheds critical to southeast aquatic conservation based on the richness, endemism, and imperilment of freshwater fish, mussel, and crayfish species.
- State Wildlife and Forest Action Plans, with additional input from regional and state conservation partners.

In 2023, proposals to the Southeast Aquatics Fund will be considered from the following geographies driven by goals set in NFWF's Longleaf Forest and Rivers Business Plan mentioned above, as well as developing priorities:

### 1) **The Alabama and Mobile-Tombigbee River Basins**

Within these basins, projects will only be considered within the three Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 8 watersheds listed below that benefit the listed focal species for that watershed. Priority will be given to projects within the specific tributary watersheds indicated (Figure 2):

- Conasauga (priority tributary: Holly Creek)
  - Focal species: Bridled and trispot darter; *Villosa* mussels (Alabama rainbow, Coosa creekshell)
- Locust Fork (priority tributary: Upper Locust Fork)
  - Focal species: Black Warrior waterdog; flattened musk turtle
- Middle Coosa (priority tributary: Big Canoe Creek)
  - Focal species: Trispot darter

### 2) **The Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint (ACF) River Basin**

Projects will be considered that support sufficient water flows for native freshwater species, with particular interest in projects associated with agricultural lands (Figure 3).



Figure 2: Southeast Aquatics Fund Geographic Focal Area 1



Figure 3: Southeast Aquatics Fund Geographic Focal Area 2

**3) Florida River Basins: Improved Grazing Lands Management**

Projects will be considered that provide outreach and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to increase access to and implementation of NRCS Farm Bill and other cost-share programs that support implementation of prescribed/rotational grazing and associated practices within cattle-producing counties across Florida. Projects should benefit freshwater aquatic species populations and help improve soil health conditions to have a positive carbon sequestration benefit. Projects may include financial cost-share assistance for implementation of prescribed/rotational grazing and associated practices that fills strategic gaps in existing federal, state, and local cost-share and incentive programs. Please see Program Priorities below for additional guidance. Applications within this geography should identify the counties in Florida where project activities will be focused.



**Figure 4: Southeast Aquatics Fund Geographic Focal Area 3**

**4) Neuse-Pamlico, Cape Fear and Pee Dee River Basins: Improved Soil Health on Working Lands**

Projects will be considered that support improved soil health practices and carbon benefits on agricultural lands that advance watershed health to benefit freshwater aquatic species populations within the Neuse-Pamlico, Cape Fear and Pee Dee River Basins (Figure 4). Projects may include providing technical assistance or financial cost-share assistance for practice implementation to strategically fill gaps in existing federal, state, and local landowner conservation cost-share and incentive programs. Please see Program Priorities below for additional guidance. Applications within this geography should identify the counties where project activities will be focused.



**Figure 5: Southeast Aquatics Fund Geographic Focal Area 4**

**Note:** Funding for habitat restoration projects benefitting freshwater species in the Cumberland and Tennessee river system is available through the Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund (2024 RFP anticipated to be posted early 2024): <http://www.nfwf.org/cumberland/Pages/home.aspx>.

**PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

Broadly speaking, NFWF is interested in bringing forward projects that have strong water quality, water quantity, and/or carbon benefits. Competitive proposals will address the threats facing native freshwater species by implementing one or more of the following strategies identified below in the Geographic Focal Areas as indicated. Proposals should demonstrate how project activities will advance specific goals and objectives of the [Longleaf Forests and Rivers Business Plan](#) and other relevant conservation plans, including, but not limited to, State Wildlife and Forest Action Plans, regional watershed management plans, fish habitat partnerships, and federal species recovery plans.

## **All Geographic Focal Areas:**

- 1) **Provide Technical Assistance and Outreach**– Support needed capacity to conduct outreach to private landowners and/or producers to increase awareness of conservation need, appropriate practices and available cost-share programs to improve water quality/quantity or species habitat connectivity. This includes providing technical assistance to develop management plans and guidance on best management practice implementation, as well as the coordination of stakeholders within the watershed to share information and build consensus around priorities for targeting activities to most effectively and efficiently achieve outcomes.

Projects should seek to leverage funding through the Farm Bill and other programs to renew or enter into new cost-share contracts or provide technical assistance on existing contracts, with particular interest in increasing Farm Bill program participation and conservation practice implementation among agricultural producers, especially farmers and ranchers in the [Historically Underserved](#) and [Special Emphasis](#) categories<sup>1</sup>.

Please ensure the project is in alignment with NRCS goals and priorities by conferring with the NRCS State Conservationist and their staff in the state in which your proposal is located. A list of NRCS contacts can be found [here](#).

Proposals must estimate the number of acres and/or miles to be restored or enhanced and the number of landowners implementing practices as a result of technical assistance and outreach activities (please refer to “Project Metrics” below).

Please see below for additional guidance by Geographic Focal Area:

Florida River Basins: Improved Grazing Lands Management – Projects will be considered that provide technical assistance and outreach to increase access to and implementation of Farm Bill and other cost-share programs that support effective grazing lands management. Activities may include outreach about available cost-share programs, development of grazing management plans and assisting with implementation of prescribed/rotational grazing and associated practices that benefit freshwater aquatic species populations as well as provide carbon benefits.

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<sup>1</sup>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](#).

Neuse-Pamlico, Cape Fear and Pee Dee River Basins: Improved Soil Health on Working Lands – Projects will be considered that provide technical assistance and outreach to increase access to and implementation of Farm Bill and other cost-share programs that support improved soil health practices on agricultural lands. Activities may include outreach about available cost-share programs, working with landowners and producers to develop management plans and assisting with implementation of soil health conservation practices (such as increased adoption of conservation cover, cover crops, reduced tillage, diversified crop rotations) that improve water quality and management to benefit freshwater aquatic species populations as well as provide carbon benefits.

- 2) **Agricultural and Forestry Best Management Practices** – Support agricultural and forestry practices that reduce sediment and nutrient runoff from the land and conserve water where assistance is needed in addition to or outside of available Farm Bill and other cost-share programs. Opportunities to leverage funding through the Farm Bill and other programs will be given priority. Proposals should clearly explain why this funding is needed and would not otherwise be covered by available cost-share programs.

Please see below for additional guidance by Geographic Focal Area:

Florida River Basins: Improved Grazing Lands Management – Projects should focus on implementation of prescribed/rotational grazing and associated practices (prescribed grazing, fence/pipeline/trough improvements, brush management, herbaceous weed treatment, pasture/range planting, etc.) on grazing lands that benefit freshwater aquatic species populations and provide carbon benefits.

Neuse-Pamlico, Cape Fear and Pee Dee River Basins: Improved Soil Health on Working Lands – Projects should focus on implementation of soil health conservation practices (such as increased adoption of conservation cover, cover crops, reduced tillage, diversified crop rotations) that improve water quality and management to benefit freshwater aquatic species populations, while providing carbon benefits on agricultural lands.

### **Alabama, Mobile-Tombigbee, and ACF River Basin Focal Areas Only:**

- 3) **Restore and Enhance Riparian and In-stream Habitat**– Restore wetland, streambank, and instream habitat in prioritized areas of a watershed that otherwise would not be addressed through agricultural or forestry best management practices to support key functions of the watershed and improve native aquatic species populations. Proposals should discuss how the project has been prioritized in the watershed to maximize cost efficiency and conservation outcomes for the target species.
- 4) **Improve stream crossings**– Restore connectivity for fish passage and reduce sedimentation by removing or retrofitting stream barriers and stream crossings (culverts, concrete fords). Preference will be given to projects that remove or retrofit high priority barriers or crossings within watersheds where barrier/crossing surveys and/or assessments are being developed or



have been completed with an emphasis on lower cost/high gain methods in locations known to fragment habitat for priority species.

- 5) **Assessment, Prioritization and Planning**– Support the assessment of barriers and crossings within a watershed to identify which should receive highest priority for removal or retrofitting based on probable gains for target species. Barriers to habitat connectivity should be identified as a main factor impacting targeted species, and if a barrier assessment for the area already exists, strong justification should be provided for how the proposed work will build upon the existing assessment. Emphasis will be placed on lowest cost/highest gain opportunities and identifying willing landowners.

### **Alabama and Mobile-Tombigbee River Basin Focal Areas Only:**

- 6) **Villosa Mussel Captive Care and Re-establishment**– Restore and manage for focal *Villosa* mussel species in areas of the Conasauga River watershed of suitable water quality, including stocking in order to enhance existing populations and restore the ecosystem at a faster rate than through water quality improvements alone. Actions under this strategy are in addition to habitat restoration and management activities described in the other program strategies.
- 7) **Monitoring**– Conduct monitoring to understand the population status and habitat conditions for bridled and trispot darter, *Villosa* mussels (Alabama rainbow, Coosa creekshell), Black Warrior waterdog and flattened musk turtle within the Conasauga, Locust Fork and Middle Coosa watersheds.

**Community Impact and Engagement:** Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes. Additionally, projects should engage community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) to help design, implement, and maintain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award.

### **PROJECT METRICS**

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Southeast Aquatics Fund has a list of metrics in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. Applicants should select the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below).

**All applicants submitting projects that include technical assistance and outreach should include the following metrics:**

- # of people reached
- # participants receiving gov't agency cost share or financial assistance
- Dollar value of government agency cost share or financial assistance
- Acres covered by government agency cost share or financial assistance

- Acres under improved management

If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Zack Bernstein (Zachary.Bernstein@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Recommended Metric (as listed in Easygrants)</b>	<b>Additional Guidance</b>
Habitat Management-Improved management practices	Habitat Management-Improved management practices- Acres under improved management	Enter the total number of acres under improved management through implementation of all agricultural and forestry conservation practices proposed through the project. Only count an acre once, even if multiple activities or treatments will occur on that acre during the project. Please include in the notes the specific practices to be implemented. Practice-specific metrics below should also be selected, as appropriate. If project will be restoring riparian habitat, please use instead the “Miles restored” metric.
Habitat Management - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Habitat Management - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with conservation tillage	Enter the number of cropland acres with conservation tillage practices. Please describe conservation tillage practices in the NOTES section.
Habitat Management - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Habitat Management- BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction- Acres with cover crops	Enter the number of cropland acres with cover crops practices. Please describe the cover crop practices in the NOTES section.
Habitat Management - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction	Habitat Management- BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction- Acres with enhanced nutrient management	Enter the number of cropland acres with enhanced nutrient management practices other than or in addition to conservation tillage or cover crops. Please describe the nutrient management practices in the NOTES section.
Habitat Management-Improved management practices	Habitat Management-Improved management practices- Acres with managed grazing	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including

		development of grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice.
Habitat Management- Removal of invasives (FL grazing only)	Habitat Restoration- Removal of invasives - Acres restored	(FL only) Enter the number of acres managed to treat invasive plants. (FL only) In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Forest understory, Junipers, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), desired dominant vegetation (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Swamp), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
Habitat Management- BMP implementation for prescribed burns (FL grazing only)	Habitat Management- BMP implementation for prescribed burns- Acres burned	(FL only) 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).
Habitat Management- BMP implementation for fencing improvements	Habitat Management- BMP implementation for fencing improvements- Miles of fencing improved or installed	Enter the number of miles of fencing improved or fencing installed to exclude livestock from streams or rivers. In the notes, indicate how many miles of the total are improved and how many were installed.
Stream restoration	Habitat Restoration- Stream restoration- Miles restored	Enter the total miles of stream restored through erosion control, streambank stabilization, and/or stream channel modification. Do not duplicate stream miles that have more than one restoration activity.
Stream restoration	Habitat Restoration- Erosion Control- Lbs sediment avoided	Enter the amount of sediment prevented from entering the system annually. In the notes, indicate the model or method used to calculate this metric.
Technical Assistance and Outreach	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives- Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance- # people reached	Enter the number of people who responded to an offer of outreach, training, or technical assistance. In the NOTES, specify the percent of people



		reached out of the total targeted. If applicable, note the number of people in the Historically Underserved or Special Emphasis categories.
Technical Assistance and Outreach	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives- Incentives- # participants receiving gov't agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the number of participants enrolled in government cost share or financial assistance programs. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP) and if applicable note the number of participants in the Historically Underserved or Special Emphasis categories.
Technical Assistance and Outreach	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives- Incentives- \$ value of government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the dollar value of federal, state, or local government agency cost share or financial assistance. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP).
Technical Assistance and Outreach	Capacity, Outreach, Incentives- Incentives- Acres covered by government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the number of acres enrolled in government agency cost share or financial assistance. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP). If applicable, number should be equal to or less than "Acres under improved management" metric.
Technical Assistance and Outreach - BMP development	Planning, Research, Monitoring- BMP development- # mgmt plans with BMPs	Enter the number of agricultural or forest management plans developed that incorporate Best Management Practices (BMPs).
Fish passage improvements	Habitat Restoration- Fish passage improvements- # passage barriers rectified	Enter the number of fish passage barriers rectified. In the notes section of this metric please indicate what type of barrier is being removed (e.g., culvert).
Fish passage improvements	Habitat Restoration- Fish passage improvements- # of barriers assessed and/or with design plans	Enter the # of in-stream barriers with assessments or engineering and design plans completed through this grant. A barrier is any artificial in-stream structure (e.g., culverts, dams, dikes, fords, pipes, weirs) that may obstruct aquatic organism passage.
Fish passage improvements	Habitat Restoration- Fish passage improvements- Miles of stream opened	Enter the number of stream miles opened as a result of the removal or retrofit of stream barriers.

Villosa Mussel Captive Care and Re-establishment	Species-specific Strategies- Translocation- # translocated/stocked	Enter the number of Villosa mussel individuals translocated or stocked.
Villosa Mussel Captive Care and Re-establishment	Species-specific Strategies- Translocation- # of sites restocked with new individuals	Enter the number of sites restocked with Villosa mussels.
Assessment, Prioritization and Planning	Planning, Research, Monitoring- Research- # studies used to inform mgmt	Enter the number of barrier assessments completed whose findings will be used to inform and/or prioritize management decisions within a watershed.
Monitoring	Planning, Research, Monitoring- Monitoring- # sites being monitored	Enter the number of streams/sites being monitored, and in the notes section indicate which priority species are being monitored (bridled and trispot darter, Alabama rainbow, Coosa creekshell, Black Warrior waterdog and flattened musk turtle).

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal Governments and Organizations and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include businesses, unincorporated individuals and international organizations.

### 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. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.

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

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

Approximately \$2.6 million is available in grant funding in 2023. Grant awards are expected to range from \$150,000 to \$450,000, depending on the overall scale and duration of the project. If outside of this range, please contact Zack Bernstein (Zachary.Bernstein@nfwf.org).

**Project Period:** Anticipated completion time for funded projects typically will be 24 – 36 months following finalization of a grant agreement. The project narrative must include a clear timetable or schedule for project completion.

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. Projects may be a discrete part of a longer-term project, provided there are definable outcomes for the proposed phase of the overall effort.

**Match Requirement:** Projects should have a minimum of 1:1 non-federal cash or in-kind match, with larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners encouraged.<sup>2</sup> Applicants who cannot meet this requirement should contact Zack Bernstein (Zachary.Bernstein@nfwf.org). Applicants are encouraged to describe federal partner contributions as well in the match section of the application. These contributions will not count toward the non-federal match but will help in understanding the amount of resources and partners contributing to the overall project.

Organizations relevant to any of NRCS's Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories 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.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

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<sup>2</sup> Note that landowner contributions being used as match for a Southeast Aquatics Fund proposal must be outside of the amount already written into any agency financial assistance contract as a cost-share contribution.

**Program Goals and Priorities** – Project contributes to the Program’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities.

**Technical Merit** – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible.

**Conservation Plan and Context** – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy, as outlined in the “Program Priorities” section above. The proposal should describe how the project will advance the aquatic species goals and strategies outlined in the [Longleaf Forests and Rivers Business Plan](#).

**NRCS Coordination** – For projects providing technical assistance and outreach to private landowners, please ensure the project is in alignment with NRCS goals and priorities by conferring with the NRCS State Conservationist and their staff in the state in which your project is located. A list of NRCS state contacts can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

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

**Cost-Effectiveness** – 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.

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

**Communication** – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

**Funding Need** – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested, and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

**Monitoring** – 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.

**Long-term Sustainability** – 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.

**Past Success** – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

**Partnership** – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

## **OTHER**

**Applicant Demographic Information** – In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic demographic information on applicants and their organizations via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions. For more details, please see the tip sheet and the Uploads section of Easygrants.

**Budget** – Costs 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.

**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](#).

**Environmental Services** – NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in,

facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

**Intellectual Property** – Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF’s website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to: habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions), environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Matching Contributions** – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged 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 which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

**Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support** – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

**Receiving Award Funds** – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

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

**Permits** – Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-



application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

**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.

## TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information [*type Program's name here as hyperlink to program page*].

Applicant Webinar [ <a href="#">REGISTER HERE</a> ]	Tuesday, June 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2023, 3:30 pm ET
Full Proposal Due Date	Tuesday, July 18 <sup>th</sup> , 2023, 11:59 pm ET
Review Period	July – October 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](https://easygrants.nfwf.org) to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
2. Once on your homepage, click the “Apply for Funding” button and select this RFP’s “Funding Opportunity” from the list of options.
3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

## APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

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

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

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:  
Zack Bernstein (Zachary.Bernstein@nfwf.org)

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

Easygrants Helpdesk

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

Voicemail: 202-595-2497

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

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