



Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund - 2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Full Proposal Due Date: **Thursday, November 16th, 2023, by 11:59 PM EST**

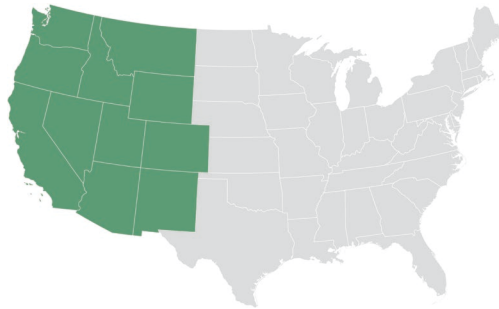
Applicant Webinar ([View Recording](#)): Tuesday, September 26th, 2023, at 10:30 AM MDT/ 12:30 PM EST

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals for projects that enhance and improve the quality of big game seasonal habitat, stopover areas, and migration corridors on federal land and/or voluntary efforts on private and Tribal land that have been prioritized by states or Native Nations. Projects will promote robust, sustainable populations of big game such as elk, mule deer and pronghorn, have positive effects on a wide diversity of other species and implement strategies that provide for increased habitat connectivity and climate resiliency. Expected funding for the effort is approximately \$3 million, and major partners include the U.S. Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the U.S. Forest Service (FS), and ConocoPhillips.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Only projects proposed in focal areas prioritized by states or Native Nations within Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming will be eligible for funding.



PROGRAM PRIORITIES

All proposals must outline specifically how projects will directly address state game and fish (wildlife) department priorities as identified in state action plans, or specific priority projects on Tribal lands, to conserve or restore habitat and measurably contribute to the sustainability of local and regional big game populations and accomplishment of program priorities which include:

1. Restoring degraded priority habitat, stopover areas, and migration corridors by activities identified in state or Indigenous plans, such as removing encroaching trees from sagebrush ecosystems, rehabilitating areas damaged by fire, or treating exotic/invasive vegetation to improve the quality and value of these areas to big game and other wildlife.



2. Work cooperatively with diverse partners to achieve wildlife friendly fencing measures, including potentially modifying (via smooth wire), removing (if no longer necessary), installing if serving to direct big game movement out of harm’s way, or seasonally adapting (seasonal lay down) fencing if proven to impede movement of big game through priority migration corridors or habitat.
3. Implement measures such as conservation easements and management agreements or other actions to protect bottlenecks within corridors and other areas within priority habitat or stopover areas threatened by fragmentation.
4. Utilize other proven actions necessary to improve the habitat quality /or restore priority big game seasonal habitat, stopover areas, or migration corridors across the West.

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.

Capacity Building:

- Additional funding is available in this RFP specifically for capacity building and technical assistance that aligns with NRCS priorities. Projects working on private, working lands should provide technical assistance to interested producers to develop management plans, design and implement conservation practices, and participate in Farm Bill programs, especially the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). A particular emphasis should be placed on promoting, designing, and implementing [climate-smart agriculture and forestry \(CSAF\) conservation practices](#) and reducing the Farm Bill practice contracting and implementation backlog. Successful projects will also seek to increase conservation program participation and practice adoption among [Historically Underserved](#) and [Special Emphasis](#) producers and forestland owners.
- 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](#).

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the following list of metrics will be provided in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Seth Gallagher (seth.gallagher@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives. Select projects may contribute to the [Rocky Mountain Rangelands Program](#) if they are located within focal areas identified in the [Business Plan](#).

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
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Conservation easements	Acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr)	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).
Best Management Practices (BMP) implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of fencing improved	Specify the number of miles of fencing improved
BMP implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of fencing removed	Specify the number of miles of fencing removed
BMP implementation for fencing improvements	Miles of migration corridor reconnected	Specify the number of miles of migration corridor reconnected
BMP implementation for livestock fencing	Miles of fencing installed	Specify the number of miles of fencing installed
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 were planted in past 10 yrs (Yes/No) & 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).
Improved management practices	Acres of private land under improved management	Specify the number of acres under improved management on private lands, Tribal lands, and/or private lands.
	Acres of Tribal land under improved management	
	Acres of public land under improved management	
Land restoration	Acres restored on private land	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).
	Acres restored on Tribal land	
	Acres restored on public land	
Removal of invasives (woody vegetation)	Acres restored	Enter # acres of invasives removed. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Junipers, Shrubs, Grasses/forbs), desired dominant vegetation (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).



Movement Success	Passage success rate	Enter the species passage success rate. Specify which species in the notes section of the metric.
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ELIGIBILITY

*****In order to be considered for funding an application must be accompanied by a letter of support/acknowledgement from the director’s office of the respective state or Native Nation wildlife agency.*****

Eligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, and Native Nations and Indigenous-led organizations.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective to do so, 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.
- While federal agency partners are eligible applicants, program funds cannot be applied to federal salary.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The 2024 Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund RFP has approximately \$3 million available for the effort. For this round NFWF anticipates awarding six to ten grants. Grants can range from one to three years in length. A minimum 1:1 non-federal match is required as in-kind or cash contributions. Please see the [Applicant Tip Sheet](#) for additional guidance. If meeting a 1:1 match requirement is a barrier for submitting an application, please reach out to Daley Burns (daley.burns@nfwf.org) to discuss possible paths forward.

Please note, the BLM and FS funds need to be spent on migration corridor projects taking place on or in proximity to BLM and FS lands. The FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife (PFW) funds will support migration



corridor activities on private and Tribal lands. Providing project maps that include identified priority areas with a general land ownership layer and legend (i.e., BLM, Forest Service, Tribal lands, state lands, private lands) is strongly encouraged.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

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

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.

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.

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

Match – Minimum 1:1 non-federal match is required; projects will be assessed on their ability to meet these minimum criteria as well as their ability to leverage beyond the minimum requirements. If meeting a 1:1 match requirement is a barrier for submitting an application, please reach out to Daley Burns (daley.burns@nfwf.org) to discuss possible paths forward.

Conservation Plan and Context – The project advances an existing conservation plan, specifically the individual state plan for “Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game Winter Range and Migration



Corridors,” or comparable Indigenous conservation plan. Uploading a project map that includes state or Indigenous-identified priority areas with a general land ownership layer and legend (i.e., BLM, Forest Service, Tribal, state lands, private lands) are ***strongly encouraged***.

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.

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, Native Nation, Indigenous-led organization, 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.

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

Please check the [Western Big Game Program](#) homepage on the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

Webinar ([View Recording](#))
Full Proposal Due Date
Review Period

Tuesday, September 26th, 2023, at 10:30 AM MDT
Thursday, November 16th, 2023, by 11:59 PM EST
November 2023 – February 2024



Awards Announced

March 2024

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). 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 - Big Game Migrations" 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.

There is a pre-recorded webinar available [here](#) which provides in-depth instructions on how to navigate Easygrants and submit an application online. Please also join our applicant webinar on September 20th to learn more about the programmatic components of this funding opportunity and to ask questions of NFWF staff.

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

Seth Gallagher, Program Director, Grasslands and Mountain West, seth.gallagher@nfwf.org

Daley Burns, Manager, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, daley.burns@nfwf.org

Kailie Todd, Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinator, kailie.todd@nfwf.org

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

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org

Voice: 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.