



Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund

2024 Request For Proposals

Applicant Webinar ([Register Here](#)): **December 12, 2023, 2:00 PM-3:30 PM Eastern Time**
NEW Full Proposal Due Date: **February 22, 2024, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals to voluntarily restore, enhance and conserve longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood forests within the historical longleaf pine range. The Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund is a funding opportunity for on-the-ground conservation projects. This RFP is a public-private partnership supported with Federal funding from USDA’s Forest Service (USFS) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and private funding from Altria Group, the Bezos Earth Fund, International Paper’s Forestland Stewards Partnership and Southern Company. Approximately \$30 million in grant funds is expected to be available in 2024, another program record funding level thanks to a second-year major contribution from the Bezos Earth Fund and increased funding from NRCS. Grant awards are expected to range from \$250,000 to \$3,000,000.

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GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

To be eligible for funding, projects must occur within the historical longleaf pine range. Preference will be given to projects located within the focal areas as outlined in NFWF’s [Business Plan: Longleaf Forests and Rivers](#). Focal areas are aligned with longleaf local implementation team (LIT) boundaries that are typically centered on significant geographic areas (SGAs) as defined in the [America’s Longleaf Restoration Initiative Range-wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine](#). These SGAs are core longleaf restoration areas, typically anchored by significant public lands, such as national forests, state forests, or military installations, where longleaf pine currently exists and around which coordinated efforts are being developed to further at-risk species recovery and restore, enhance, protect, and connect longleaf pine on an ecosystem level. A PDF map

of the historical longleaf pine range and NFWF focal areas can be [viewed here](#). An interactive map can be viewed here: [Interactive Map](#).

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Proposals should demonstrate how project strategies will advance specific longleaf pine and/or bottomland hardwood habitat and species goals and objectives outlined in the following complementary guiding documents:

- [Business Plan: Longleaf Forests and Rivers](#) which outlines NFWF's strategic priorities and goals to restore and enhance longleaf pine forest ecosystems. Four species are targeted within the business plan: red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow, and northern bobwhite. These four species were selected as indicators of healthy longleaf ecosystems and represent the habitat needs of a broader suite of species dependent upon this system.
- [America's Longleaf Restoration Initiative's](#) (ALRI) [Range-Wide Conservation Plan for Longleaf Pine](#), which outlines strategic restoration goals for longleaf pine ecosystem restoration and enhancement on public and private lands through collaborative, on-the-ground actions. Applicants are encouraged to also review ALRI's three-year [strategic priorities and actions](#) document.

In pursuit of habitat and species restoration goals, applicants are encouraged to advance projects that also address co-benefits and engage local communities and historically underserved landowners as outlined below:

- **Conservation Co-Benefits:** Projects that will implement habitat restoration or improvement practices that benefit wildlife while also sequestering carbon and/or protecting and improving water quantity or quality are encouraged. Note, there is strong funder interest in tree planting projects this year and NFWF seeks proposals that will help expand and accelerate tree plantings. Applicants should reach out to program staff prior to submitting a proposal to discuss projects that will address carbon and water outcomes. Note: NFWF intends to calculate the estimated carbon benefits associated with any given project. These calculations will not be used to generate carbon credits, but rather for narrative and demonstration, such as communicating to partners and their supply chain networks about the potential carbon value and other co-benefits of any project and conservation practice(s) supported through this program.
- **Community Impact and Engagement:** Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative project design, implementation and management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When working with tribes, applicants should incorporate traditional ecological knowledge where relevant. Examples of community-level partners include municipalities, non-governmental organizations, community organizations, community leaders, tribes, and private landowners.

Projects that specifically seek to engage minority, historically underserved and unserved landowners, as well as minority professionals in the field of forestry and longleaf restoration, are encouraged to review the ALRI's [Longleaf for All Initiative](#) and [barriers and recommendations document](#) for potential strategies to help address these challenges.

Funding Strategies: Projects should seek to voluntarily implement one or more of the following strategies to address program priorities and restore or improve longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood habitats and populations of at-risk, listed and other wildlife species, with preference given to projects that benefit the following focal species: red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow, and/or northern bobwhite.

NOTE: Much of the funding available this year is for longleaf pine strategies. Applicants seeking funding to support bottomland hardwood restoration, enhancement and/or conservation are encouraged to incorporate these strategies as part of a broader proposal that also includes longleaf pine strategies.

- 1. Establishing and Restoring Longleaf Pine and Bottomland Hardwood Forests:** Significant focus is being placed this year on tree planting efforts. NFWF encourages projects that will expand and accelerate tree planting and address barriers to scaling up longleaf planting. This includes projects that create new longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood forest habitat, including site preparation and planting on public and private lands. Projects should describe all necessary site preparation for planting, number of acres and seedlings that will be planted, timing of when planting is expected to be completed, and summarize plans to promote long-term sustainability and maintenance of plantings (e.g., mechanical and/or chemical treatments, prescribed burning, etc.).

In addition to establishing longleaf pine forests through planting, NFWF seeks projects that will implement treatments (ex. thinning and removal of other pine and hardwood species from the overstory) to restore existing forest stands where longleaf pine is currently a minor component of the overstory (<50%) to a longleaf dominant condition (> 50% of the canopy consisting of longleaf pine). Please use the separate metrics provided for tracking acres planted versus acres of existing forest restored to a longleaf dominant condition using treatments as described in the Project Metrics section of the RFP.

- a. Address Barriers to Scaling-Up of Longleaf Planting:** Strategies that address barriers to scaling up longleaf pine planting will be considered, including but not limited to improved coordination and communication between landowners, seedling nurseries, consulting foresters and other key planting stakeholders that facilitates increased longleaf plantings; seed collection, processing, and storage; seedling propagation, improvement, and production; planting workforce development; and monitoring planting survival and growth. Projects that both address barriers and complete tree planting during the project period of performance are preferred.
- 2. Enhancing and Maintaining Existing Longleaf Pine and Bottomland Hardwood Ecosystems:** Includes projects that maintain, expand and promote effective management of existing longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood forest habitats on public and private lands through the use of management treatments to benefit wildlife, including, but not limited to the following:

For Longleaf Pine:

- Prescribed Burning: Strategies and activities that increase implementation of prescribed fire on private and public lands, including, but not limited to, implementation and technical assistance capacity, coordination and collaboration through fire teams, prescribed burn associations, and/or other strategies.
- Other Silvicultural Treatments: Implement treatments to improve longleaf forest conditions to benefit wildlife, forest health and resilience and improve carbon sequestration, such as overstory thinning, mechanical or chemical treatments to remove invasive species, hardwoods, and other competing pine species, and planting native under-story plant species to improve wildlife habitat.

For Bottomland Hardwood Forests:

- Implement strategies and activities that promote regeneration of natural stands and/or improved management of existing natural or planted stands through invasive species control, thinning and other treatments that enhance wildlife value. Projects may include inter-planting as needed to improve tree species composition and conditions for wildlife.

3. **Silvopasture/Beef Cattle Grazing in Longleaf Pine:** Includes projects that provide technical and/or financial assistance to landowners to integrate beef cattle grazing within longleaf pine forests on suitable sites. Projects may include planting longleaf trees within pastures or integrating cattle within existing longleaf pine forests. Preference is for projects that balance grazing and stocking rates with wildlife habitat management objectives and promote the restoration, enhancement, and maintenance of native understory vegetation for forage, including deep rooted species that enhance and sustain carbon sequestration. Funds may not be used to purchase cattle or to make large capital investments including but not limited to building construction and maintenance.
4. **Expanding and Coordinating Technical Assistance and Outreach:** Significant funding through USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service and other funding partners is available this year to support collaborative and strategic outreach and technical assistance to increase the number of private landowners and/or producers engaged in longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood restoration and stewardship practices. Proposals must estimate the number of acres to be restored, enhanced, or maintained because of proposed outreach and technical assistance activities. Projects should effectively align with and complement other existing private land initiatives, implementation plans or programs, such as [NRCS's Longleaf Pine Initiative](#), [USDA's Working Lands for Wildlife](#), [US Fish & Wildlife Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program](#), and/or [DOD Sentinel Landscapes](#).
 - **Increase outreach and technical assistance delivery success:** Strategies may include:
 - Targeting outreach for private landowners and producers, including the use of innovative outreach methods that expand reach and increase landowner/producer participation and implementation of conservation practices to improve habitat and support wildlife species.
 - Providing technical assistance to interested landowners to develop management plans, design and implement conservation practices, and participate in Farm Bill programs. As a funder, USDA has a special interest in bolstering enrollment into the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). There is a particular emphasis this year on promoting, designing, and implementing [climate-smart agriculture and forestry \(CSAF\) conservation practices](#) and reducing the Farm Bill practice contracting and implementation backlog. Projects that increase conservation program participation and practice adoption among USDA defined [Historically Underserved](#) and [Special Emphasis](#) farmers, ranchers, and forestland owners are strongly encouraged.

In addition to supporting implementation of Farm Bill programs, applicants are encouraged to collaborate with FWS Partners for Fish and Wildlife Biologists, other federal and state agency staff, forestry and wildlife consultants, and forest industry where appropriate to engage private landowners, assist with enrollment in existing financial assistance programs and implementation longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood conservation practices. Applicants that need assistance connecting with any of the potential collaborators mentioned above are encouraged to contact the NFWF RFP contacts listed in the Application Assistance section below.

- **Advance new market-oriented and/or incentive programs:** Pilot innovative, market-oriented solutions and/or incentive programs that stimulate landowner participation in longleaf restoration efforts.
 - **Increase participation in third-party forest certification:** Increase participation in third-party forest certification programs to encourage third-party verification of sustainable forest management practices for longleaf pine ecosystem, bottomland hardwood forests, and associated wildlife.
5. **Building and Improving Local Implementation Team Capacity:** A portion of available grant funding may be allocated to support a local implementation team (LIT) coordinator position to provide

coordination across all significant geographic area (SGA) partners, priorities and activities, and accelerate achievement of longleaf restoration and maintenance goals for the defined region. Funding for LIT coordinators is currently limited to those LITs working within an SGA.

Proposed capacity-building activities must be integrated as part of a larger project addressing one or more of strategies 1-4 above. Proposals must detail how LIT capacity investments will lead to specific, measurable, on-the-ground conservation outcomes within the project period.

- 6. Accelerating Species Recovery and Response Monitoring:** Some funding is available to support translocation, installation of nest-cavity inserts, captive rearing/headstarting and reintroduction, and/or other species-specific restoration and management activities to aid recovery of longleaf ecosystem-dependent species. Preference will be given to projects that contribute to the species outcomes outlined in the [Business Plan: Longleaf Forests and Rivers](#) for red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow, and northern bobwhite, and that are located within a business plan species focal area. Habitat restoration and species-specific strategies that aid in the recovery of populations of other forest-dependent wildlife species that are indicators of healthy forest ecosystems, including, but not limited to swallow-tailed kite, red-headed woodpecker, brown-headed nuthatch, eastern indigo snake, wild turkey, gopher frog and flatwoods salamander (spp.) will also be considered.

Proposals requesting funds to monitor species response to habitat restoration and management treatments and/or species-specific activities will be considered. Where baseline data is not available, monitoring proposals should establish a baseline measurement. This baseline should then be used to measure change over time as restoration activities are undertaken. Preference will be given to monitoring proposals that include habitat restoration and/or enhancement implementation or monitor species response to habitat restoration and/or enhancement projects funded through the same proposal or another NFWF Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund grant. Proposals should demonstrate how activities advance implementation of established conservation strategies within federal species recovery plans, regional bird conservation plans and/or state wildlife action plans. Applicants must contact Jon Scott (jonathan.scott@nfwf.org) prior to applying for species-specific strategies and/or monitoring to discuss the project's geographic location and proposed activities.

- 7. Conservation Easements and Fee-Simple Acquisitions:** Funding is available to facilitate voluntary, targeted conservation easement and/or fee-simple acquisition projects that protect existing, high-quality longleaf pine and bottomland hardwood habitat or key sites targeted for longleaf and bottomland hardwood restoration that are part of a broader restoration proposal.

Requests for funding under this strategy should be limited to transaction and due-diligence costs, such as boundary survey, appraisal, environmental report, etc. Grant funding may not be used for stewardship endowments. In limited instances, highly leveraged projects will be considered for acquisition costs. Please contact Jon Scott (jonathan.scott@nfwf.org) to discuss specific land conservation projects.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund has a list of metrics 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 think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Jon Scott (jonathan.scott@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Projects that may involve organizations, landowners or producers that identify as one or more of the federal Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories (described on page 11) are encouraged to apply and should report impact on such categories in the notes section of their selected metrics shown below.

Strategy	Easygrants Metric	Additional Guidance
Establishing and Restoring Longleaf Pine and Bottomland Hardwood Forests	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on private lands through plantings	Enter the total acres of longleaf pine that will be planted on private lands. For projects that include plantings in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on public lands through plantings	Enter the total acres of longleaf pine that will be planted on public lands. For projects that include plantings in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on private lands	Enter the total number of longleaf pine seedlings that will be planted on private lands. For projects that include plantings in multiple states, please breakout the number of trees by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), density per acre, and mortality rate.
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land, wetland restoration - # of trees planted on public lands	Enter the total number of longleaf pine seedlings that will be planted on public lands. For projects that include plantings in multiple states, please breakout the number of trees by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), density per acre, and mortality rate.
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Land restoration - Acres restored on private land	Enter the total acres of bottomland hardwoods that will be planted on private lands. For projects that include plantings in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf).
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Land restoration - Acres restored on public land	Enter the total acres of bottomland hardwoods that will be planted on public lands. For projects that include plantings in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf).
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Land restoration - # of trees planted on private lands	Enter the total number of bottomland hardwood seedlings that will be planted on private lands. For projects that include plantings in multiple states, please break out the number of seedlings by state (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), forest type planted (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf), density per acre, and mortality rate.
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Land restoration - # of trees planted on public lands	Enter the total number of bottomland hardwood seedlings that will be planted on public lands. For projects that include plantings in multiple states, please break out the number of seedlings by state (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grass, shrub), forest type planted (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf), density per acre, and mortality rate.
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Seed harvesting - lbs harvested	Enter the number of pounds of longleaf seed that will be collected.

	LLSF – Longleaf Pine - Plant cultivation - # seedlings propagated	Enter the number of longleaf pine seedlings that will be propagated.
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on private lands through silvicultural manipulation	Enter the total acres of existing forest where longleaf is currently a minor component (less than 50% of the total forest canopy) and will be restored to a longleaf dominant condition (>50% longleaf in the overstory) through silvicultural manipulation (example: thinning/removal of other tree species to make longleaf the dominant overstory species) on private lands. In the notes, indicate the proportion of biomass being removed. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Land restoration - Acres restored on public lands through silvicultural manipulation	Enter the total acres of existing forest where longleaf is currently a minor component (less than 50% of the total forest canopy) and will be restored to a longleaf dominant condition (>50% longleaf in the overstory) through silvicultural manipulation (example: thinning/removal of other tree species to make longleaf the dominant overstory species) on public lands. In the notes, indicate the proportion of biomass being removed. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable).
Enhancing and Maintaining Existing Longleaf Pine and Bottomland Hardwood Ecosystems	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - BMP implementation for prescribed burns - Acres private land burned	Enter the total acres of prescribed burning that will be implemented on longleaf pine habitat on private lands. Please include site prep burning in this metric. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify 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 (Longleaf-slash pine, Longleaf-slash pine with high productivity and management intensity, Loblolly-shortleaf pine, Loblolly-shortleaf pine with high productivity and management intensity, Mixed conifer).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - BMP implementation for prescribed burns - Acres public land burned	Enter the total acres of prescribed burning that will be implemented on longleaf pine habitat on public lands. Please include site prep burning in this metric. For projects that include outcomes in multiple states, please breakout acreage by state in the notes section (estimates are acceptable). In the NOTES, specify 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 (Longleaf-slash pine, Longleaf-slash pine with high productivity and management intensity, Loblolly-shortleaf pine, Loblolly-shortleaf pine with high productivity and management intensity, Mixed conifer).
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (private)	Enter the total acres of over-story thinning, mid-story thinning, and/or native understory establishment that will be completed within existing longleaf pine habitat on private lands. Acres of prescribed fire and acres of invasive species treated should not be included in this total. Please report acres of prescribed fire and invasive species treated using the separate metrics available for these activities. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Improved management	Enter the total acres of over-story thinning, mid-story thinning, and/or native understory establishment that will be completed within existing longleaf pine habitat on public lands. Acres of

	practices - Acres under imp mgt (public)	prescribed fire and acres of invasive species treated should not be included in this total. Please report acres of prescribed fire and invasive species treated using the separate metrics available for these activities. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	LLSF – Longleaf Pine – Removal of invasives – Acres restored on private lands	Enter the total acres of invasive species that will be removed from within longleaf pine stands on private lands. In the NOTES, specify: type/species of vegetation removed (Forest understory, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
	LLSF – Longleaf Pine – Removal of invasives – Acres restored on public lands	Enter the total acres of invasive species that will be removed from within longleaf pine stands on public lands. In the NOTES, specify: type/species of vegetation removed (Forest understory, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (private)	Enter the number of acres that will be treated to improve or maintain existing bottomland hardwood forest on private lands. Acres of invasive species treated should not be included in this total. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Improved management practices - Acres under imp mgt (public)	Enter the number of acres that will be treated to improve or maintain existing bottomland hardwood forest on public lands. Acres of invasive species treated should not be included in this total. An acre is to be reported on only one time, even if subjected to more than one treatment.
	LLSF – Bottomland Hardwoods – Removal of invasives – Acres restored on private lands	Enter the number of acres of invasive species that will be removed from within existing bottomland hardwood stands on private lands. In the NOTES, specify: type/species of vegetation removed (Forest understory, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), desired dominant vegetation (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
	LLSF – Bottomland Hardwoods – Removal of invasives – Acres restored on public lands	Enter the number of acres of invasive species that will be removed from within existing bottomland hardwood stands on public lands. In the NOTES, specify: type/species of vegetation removed (Forest understory, Shrubs, Kudzu/vines, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), desired dominant vegetation (broadleaf or swamp--broadleaf), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
Silvopasture/ Beef Cattle Grazing in Longleaf Pine	LLSF - Improved management practices – Acres with managed grazing	Enter the number of acres of longleaf pine habitat that will be managed with beef cattle grazing. This metric may include acres of pasture where longleaf pine is planted and/or acres of existing longleaf pine forest where beef cattle grazing is integrated as part of the management regime. In the Notes, describe the practices that will be implemented.
Expanding and Coordinating Private Landowner	Note: Projects that will engage private landowners and/or producers should select all three of the following metrics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # people targeted • # people reached 	

Technical Assistance and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # people with changed behavior Data for all three metrics will enable NFWF to better understand landowner/producer response to outreach, education and technical assistance efforts.	
	LLSF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people targeted	Enter the number of landowners that will be targeted by outreach activities. Examples include direct mailings and targeted media advertisements. Please only include landowners in this metric.
	LLSF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached	Enter the number of landowners anticipated to be reached through educational meetings, trainings and/or technical assistance. The target value for this metric should be a subset of the “# of people targeted” metric. If the target value includes landowners reached through more than one activity, please break out in the notes section. If applicable, in the notes section, please report the number of people reached in each underserved/special emphasis category. Please only include landowners in this metric.
	LLSF - Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people with changed behavior	Enter the number of private landowners reached who are expected to implement conservation actions. Examples include developing a conservation plan, enrolling in a financial assistance program, implementing a conservation practice. The target value for this metric should be a subset of the “# of people reached” metric. If applicable, in the notes section, please report the number of people with changed behavior in each underserved/special emphasis category. Please only include landowners in this metric.
	LLSF - BMP development - # mgmt plans with BMPs	Enter the number of forest plans (restoration, management, and/or stewardship) that will be developed.
	LLSF - Incentives - # participants receiving government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the number of landowners or producers that will receive government cost share or financial assistance. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP, CSP, state agency program, etc.). Please do not include landowners that will receive NFWF funded cost-share or financial assistance.
	LLSF – Incentives - Dollar value of government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the total dollar value of government agency cost share or financial assistance contracts that will be awarded to landowners resulting from technical assistance provided through the project. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP, CSP, state agency program, etc.). Please do not include NFWF funded cost-share or financial assistance.
	LLSF – Incentives - Acres covered by government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the number of acres of practices that will be included in government cost share or financial assistance program contracts resulting from technical assistance provided through the project. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP, CSP, state agency program, etc.). Please do not include the number of acres of practices that will be paid for with NFWF funded cost-share or financial assistance.
	LLSF – Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people demonstrating a minimum level of knowledge, attitudes, or skills	Enter the number of citizens engaged in education and outreach activities (example: number of individuals that attended a Fire Festival). This number may also include the number of landowners engaged through technical assistance and outreach.
Accelerating Species Recovery	LLSF - Red-cockaded Woodpecker - Translocation - # translocated/stocked	Enter the number of <u>pairs</u> of red-cockaded woodpeckers that will be translocated.
	LLSF - Gopher Tortoise - Translocation - # translocated/stocked	Enter the number of <u>individual</u> gopher tortoises that will be translocated and/or released.

Conservation Easements and Fee-Simple Acquisitions	LLSF - Longleaf Pine - Conservation easements - Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of longleaf pine habitat acres that will be 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).
	LLSF - Bottomland Hardwoods - Conservation easements - Acres protected under easement	Enter the number of bottomland hardwood acres that will be 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).
	LLSF – Longleaf Pine – Land Acquisitions - Acres acquired in fee	Enter the number of acres of longleaf pine habitat that will be acquired in fee. If the parcel has been identified, in the NOTES indicate whether there is a competing offer (Yes/No) or potential zoning change (Yes/No), and what % of natural land cover would be cleared in the absence of the acquisition.
	LLSF – Bottomland Hardwoods – Land Acquisitions - Acres acquired in fee	Enter the number of acres of bottomland hardwood habitat that will be acquired in fee. If the parcel has been identified, in the NOTES indicate whether there is a competing offer (Yes/No) or potential zoning change (Yes/No), and what % of natural land cover would be cleared in the absence of the acquisition.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal Governments and Organizations, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include U.S. Federal government agencies, businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations. U.S. Federal agencies, businesses and unincorporated individuals are encouraged to partner with applicants but are not eligible to submit an application.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- 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.
- **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.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund anticipates awarding approximately \$30 million in grants in 2024. Grant awards are expected to range from \$250,000 to \$3,000,000. Applicants considering proposals requesting a funding amount above or below this funding range are encouraged to contact NFWF prior to submitting. This program has one annual application cycle and awards approximately 20-25 grants per year.

Project Period: Anticipated completion time for funded projects typically will be 24-48 months following finalization of a grant agreement. Significant progress with project implementation is expected to be achieved in year one, including interim deliverables. 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.

Matching Funds: With the availability of federal and private funding sources, there is flexibility and therefore matching funds are encouraged, but not required. However, projects that include non-federal cash or in-kind¹ match and/or federal leverage are encouraged and will be more competitive. Please reach out to NFWF program staff, Jon Scott (jonathan.scott@nfwf.org) or Zack Bernstein (zachary.bernstein@nfwf.org), and review the Applicant Tip Sheet for additional guidance on how to report match and leverage in the 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 program and funder priorities and the following criteria.

Program Goals and Priorities: Project contributes to the Fund's habitat and species goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics that will be tracked and measured to evaluate project success. In addition to meeting key habitat needs for longleaf ecosystem indicator species (red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise, Bachman's sparrow, northern bobwhite quail), describe any significant benefits to other at-risk, threatened or endangered species, or even game species. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in the request for proposals.

Conservation Plan and Context: Describe how the project addresses the priorities and goals outlined in:

- the [Business Plan: Longleaf Forests and Rivers](#) and other existing conservation plans or strategies that benefits the longleaf pine ecosystem and associated species.
- Proposals submitted on behalf of a longleaf LIT/SGA should describe how the project will support and advance the priorities identified in a LIT/SGA conservation plan.

Funding Need: Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding. Applicants with active Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund grants that overlap with the period of performance of the proposed project should describe why additional funds are needed, and how the proposed project will complement and expand upon previously funded project(s).

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, and design and implementation. Applications involving private lands should be shared with the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist for input and guidance before submission ([View NRCS State conservationist contacts](#)).

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

¹ Note that landowner contributions being used as match for a Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund grant must be outside of the amount already written into any agency financial assistance contract as a cost-share contribution.

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.

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.

Letters of Support and/or Acknowledgement of Coordination: Please review the following closely to determine whether your project requires a letter(s) of support from an agency(ies) or partners. Available agency and partner contact information can be found here: [Contact Information](#)

- Letter(s) from the applicable State Forestry office(s), highlighting how the proposed project is being coordinated with their office is required for projects including work on state and private lands.
- Letter of support from the appropriate military installation/base Commander, or official designee that addresses the specific project benefits to the military mission are required for projects involving or benefitting a local military installation or base.
- Letter of support from the Forest Supervisor of the applicable National Forest is required for projects that include work on a National Forest.
- Letter(s) from the appropriate NRCS State Conservationist(s) acknowledging how the proposed project is being coordinated with their office are recommended for projects including private lands.
- Letter(s) from the appropriate State Department of Wildlife Conservation and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acknowledging how the proposed project supports a State Wildlife Action Plan or conservation and recovery of at-risk or listed species or [Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program](#) priorities are recommended.
- Projects that geographically overlap with a local implementation team (LIT) but are not submitted on behalf of the LIT partnership, must provide an acknowledgement letter from the LIT(s) outlining how the project will coordinate with the LIT partners and complement or enhance existing/planned LIT/SGA activities.
- Letters documenting the support/contributions of other project partners are encouraged.

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.

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.

OTHER

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

Underserved/Special Emphasis Categories: The Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund encourages projects that engage organizations, landowners and producers in one or more of the USDA's [Historically Underserved](#) and [Special Emphasis](#) categories.

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.

Special Instructions: Explanation of How Project Supports DoD Mission Objectives – For applicants whose project includes work on, adjacent to, or within proximity of military bases or installations, applications must demonstrate how proposed projects will support DoD’s mission objectives and complete the DOD questionnaire provided as an upload in Easygrants.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information on the *Longleaf Landscape Stewardship Fund*.

Applicant Webinar [Register Here]	December 12, 2023, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM, Eastern Time
Full Proposal Due Date	February 15, 2024, 11:59 PM, Eastern Time
Review Period	February 2024-May 2024
Awards Announced	Late May/Early June 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” 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:

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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.