



America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative

NFWF CONTACTS

Rachel Dawson

Program Director,
National Programs
rachel.dawson@nfwf.org
202-595-2643

Sydney Godbey

Senior Manager,
National Programs
sydney.godbey@nfwf.org
202-595-2612

Ericka Popovich

Program Manager,
National Programs
ericka.popovich@nfwf.org
202-595-2451

Zoey Apelt

Coordinator,
Regional Programs
zoey.apelt@nfwf.org
202-915-0971

PARTNERS

- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Native Americans in Philanthropy
- E. Richard King Mellon Foundation

ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,800 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of more than \$10 billion.



Elk herd

BACKGROUND

The America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative (AERI) supports locally led projects that invest in fish and wildlife habitat restoration, ecosystem and community resilience, access to nature, conservation workforce development, habitat corridors and connectivity, and collaborative, partnership-driven conservation.

By combining multiple sources of federal and private funding into a single competitive grant program, the America's Ecosystem Restoration Initiative simplifies the application process, enabling more impactful multijurisdictional projects, while making it easier for states, Tribal and Native Nations, U.S. territories, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and others to access a variety of funds with one application. This opportunity is the result of significant financial contributions from the U.S. Department of the Interior through the Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Forest Service, Native Americans in Philanthropy, and other private funders.

AERI seeks to advance conservation and restoration projects that address at least one of the following core areas of need:

- Conserving and restoring rivers, coasts, wetlands, and watersheds
- Conserving and restoring forests, grasslands and other terrestrial ecosystems
- Connecting and reconnecting wildlife corridors, landscapes, watersheds, and seascapes
- Improving community and ecosystem resilience to flooding, drought, and other threats
- Expanding community access to the outdoors
- Applicants are encouraged to develop voluntary landscape scale and/or cross jurisdictional projects that advance existing conservation plans and/or are informed by Indigenous Knowledge.

(continued)



Golden-winged warbler

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

AERI seeks to advance conservation and restoration projects that focus on at least one of the following core focal areas:

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

Collectively, these themes allow applicants to develop landscape-level AERI projects that address conservation and restoration needs that showcase cumulative benefits to fish and wildlife, carbon sequestration and storage, engage with underserved communities, support community access to nature and help safeguard ecosystems through conservation, resilience-focused and nature-based solutions. These core focal areas will be addressed through five grant categories:

- 1. Implementation Grants:** awarded to states, U.S. territories, and federally recognized Tribes to implement projects that address program priorities on public, Tribal and/or private lands.
- 2. Planning Grants:** awarded to states, U.S. territories, and federally recognized Tribes to enhance local

capacity to implement future on-the-ground actions that address program priorities through community-based assessments, partnership building, planning, project design and other technical assistance activities.

- 3. National Forest Grants:** awarded for projects on National Forest System lands that achieve the restoration of a forest ecosystem through the removal of vegetation, the use of prescribed fire or the decommissioning of an unauthorized, temporary or system roads.
- 4. Private Forests, Rangeland and Farmland Grants:** awarded for projects that support outreach and engagement with private landowners for voluntary conservation efforts on working lands to advance NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife Framework and Initiatives.

This program will streamline and centralize the grant application making it easier for states, Tribes, territories, local governments, non-governmental conservation organizations and others to use one application to potentially access multiple funding sources. Projects are often landscape-scale, span multiple jurisdictions and boundaries, and are made possible through robust, committed partnerships. NFWF continues to seek additional federal and private-sector partners to leverage and enhance AERI funding opportunity in the coming years.