Conservation Partners Program

2025 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NFWF is committed to operating in full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and Executive Orders. We continuously monitor legal and regulatory developments to ensure our policies, procedures, and operations align with current federal directives. We encourage all applicants to do the same.

The ability and extent to which NFWF is able to make awards is contingent upon receipt of funds from federal agencies and/or other funding partners. Final funding decisions will be made based on the applications received and the level and timing of funding received by NFWF.

TIMELINE

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

Applicant Webinar:	May 22, 2025 at 3:00 PM ET. Register for the webinar using this link.
Full Proposals Due:	**July 15, 2025 by 11:59 PM ET**
Review Period:	July-November 2025
Awards Announced:	December 2025

OVERVIEW

In partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), The J.M. Smucker Co., and with additional support from the General Mills, Walmart and Sam's Club collaboration, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will award competitive grants to accelerate the voluntary adoption of regenerative agriculture principles and conservation practices on private working lands in priority geographic areas.

Grant recipients will provide technical assistance to interested farmers and ranchers to develop conservation plans, design and implement conservation practices, share their experiences and lessons learned, and enroll in Farm Bill conservation programs, especially the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). A particular emphasis should be placed on implementing, designing, and promoting conservation practices that improve soil health increase grazing system function, restore wetlands, develop perennial wildlife habitat, improve nutrient management, enhance forest health, and support social and economic resilience among agricultural producers. Successful projects will complement NRCS technical assistance capacity by helping to reduce the Farm Bill conservation practice planning, contracting, and implementation backlog.

GRANT AWARD INFORMATION

- Typical grant awards will range from $200,000 to $1,000,000, with an estimated average grant size of approximately $500,000.
- **Project Period: Project start date cannot be before October 1, 2025** and should be within 6 months of the award announcement period. The project end date should be within 36 months of the project start date.
- **Project Scale:** The Conservation Partners Program seeks to foster systems change and achieve environmental and social benefits at a landscape scale. As such, it supports projects that generate impact on the order of thousands or tens of thousands of acres, with a strong preference for projects on the larger end of the scale. Projects that propose smaller acreages and outcomes are likely less competitive. Reviewers recognize that project scale will vary according to project type (rangeland grazing vs. edge-of-field cropland focus) and geography, and will evaluate projects in comparison to analogous projects.

- **Matching Contributions:** The ratio of matching contributions to grant funding requested is an important criterion considered during the review process. While matching contributions are not required, applicants are encouraged to offer higher match ratios to be more competitive.
    - To be eligible, matching contributions must be spent or applied during the period of performance indicated in the application. Matching contributions may include cash, in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. In addition, eligible indirect costs (that would not be paid with requested grant funding) may be applied as match. More information about using indirect costs as match can be found by clicking here.
    - The landowner portion of cost-share required to obtain funding from Farm Bill programs is **NOT** an eligible source of match for this funding opportunity.
    - Organizations that are unable to provide significant non-federal matching contributions are encouraged to contact NFWF prior to submitting a proposal. Discussing challenges and setting expectations will help ensure matching contributions do not become an undue barrier during the review process.

- **Payment Timeline**: After award announcements, NFWF staff will work with grantees to prepare grant agreements and other necessary paperwork electronically using the Easygrants system. Additional information about the grantee's organization and its finances may be solicited during this time. Once grant agreements are finalized, funds will typically be paid to grantees on a reimbursable basis. Funds may be advanced to qualified grantees on an as-needed basis.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Conservation Partners Program (CPP) will fund locally-led projects that provide technical assistance to agricultural producers seeking to voluntarily adopt regenerative agriculture systems and conservation practices. Grant recipients will hire or support field conservation professionals to help producers develop and implement economically sound management practices that yield positive environmental outcomes. Grant funds cannot be used to provide financial assistance to farmers and ranchers, though projects may leverage other funding for this purpose. Grant funds may not directly support other projects with existing, USDA-funded technical assistance budgets, such as those supported through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and Advancing Markets for Producers (AMP) initiative.

Competitive projects will increase participation in Farm Bill programs as one way to advance regenerative agriculture principles. Some of these principles include: 1) minimizing chronic disturbances to the soil and biological community; 2) enhancing wildlife habitat; 3) extending crop rotations; 4) keeping the soil covered; 5) keeping a living root in the ground at all times; 6) efficiently managing water resources; and 7) integrating livestock into agricultural systems.

The Conservation Partners Program will support projects that:

- Direct staff resources to work with agricultural producers to develop site-specific conservation plans and design and implement regenerative agriculture systems and practices.
- Help agricultural producers access financial assistance through Farm Bill conservation programs, especially the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).
- Develop innovative technical assistance approaches that reach new producers and modernize technical assistance delivery.
- Foster the development of peer-to-peer networks to advance regional knowledge and identify and overcome barriers to adopting regenerative agriculture systems and practices.
- Advance locally led conservation by incorporating local input into project design and aligning individual producer objectives with the community's natural resource conservation priorities.
- Generate environmental benefits, such as improvements to wildlife habitat, soil health, and water quantity and quality.
- Promote conservation systems to complement and advance producer economic interests and operational efficiency.
- Align with NRCS goals, resource conservation priorities, and capacity needs. Applicants should confer with the NRCS State Conservationist and their staff in the state in which the project is located. A list of NRCS state contacts can be found **here.**

Competitive projects will advance one or more of the following strategies:

- Crop management: Improve water quality and maximize soil health and wildlife values by increasing adoption of cover crops, reduced tillage, extended crop rotations, perennial cropping systems, nutrient and pesticide management plans, precision agriculture, and other soil health practices.
- Grazing management: Promote plant growth above and below ground, improve wildlife habitat, and maximize soil health by establishing native grasses and optimizing stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery.
- Irrigation improvement: Improve hydrology, in-stream flows, aquifer recharge, water conservation, and flood and drought resilience by increasing efficiency of on-farm irrigation practices and reducing agricultural runoff.
- Habitat enhancement: Enhance habitat values of working grasslands, field buffers, forests, wetlands, riparian zones, floodplains and other adjacent areas through native plantings, removal of invasive species, beneficial mowing, prescribed burning, fencing and other conservation practices.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

This funding opportunity will provide grants for projects that align geographically with the following:

1. Great Plains
2. Upper Mississippi River Basin
3. Great Lakes Basin
4. Western Grazing Lands

1) Great Plains

This geography includes the region of historic tallgrass, mixed grass, and shortgrass prairie spanning portions of Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota, Oklahoma, Texas, and Wyoming (see map here). Key objectives for this category include:

- Improve soil health on grazing lands and crop lands.
- Sustain and enhance conservation and economic values associated with working grasslands.
- Conserve and sustainably manage limited water resources.
- Reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment runoff to local waterways.
- Enhance habitat quality and connectivity for waterfowl, shorebirds, pollinators, and many other species that depend on the grassland–wetland complexes of the region.

Priority strategies include crop management, habitat enhancement, and grazing management. Under crop management, priority will be given to projects focused on lands with wheat in active rotation, particularly in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Montana, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado.

2) Upper Mississippi River Basin

This geography includes the NRCS's Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) states upstream of the Ohio River confluence with the Mississippi River. Priority will be given to projects focused within MRBI Focus Area Watersheds. Key objectives for this category include:

- Improve soil health on crop lands, pastures, and other grazing lands.
- Reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment runoff to local waterways.
- Enhance habitat for migratory birds, fish, and other aquatic species.

Priority strategies include crop management, grazing management, and habitat enhancement. Under crop management, priority will be given to projects on lands with corn in active rotation in Ohio, or wheat in active rotation in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio. Proposals that contribute to the goals of an established Sentinel Landscape will also receive special consideration.

3) Great Lakes Basin

This geography includes the U.S. portion of Great Lakes watersheds (see map here). Key objectives for this category include:

- Improve soil health on crop lands, pastures, and other grazing lands.
- Reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment runoff to local waterways.

- Engage landowners in conservation and regenerative agriculture planning and peer-to-peer learning.
- Reduce Farm Bill practice contracting and implementation backlog.

Priority strategies include grazing management, crop management, nutrient management, and habitat enhancement. Priority will be given to applicants that build upon established relationships with landowners through previous local work, incorporate partnerships with local entities and/or connect to demonstration farms or other efforts that align with regenerative agriculture priorities in the region.

See Metrics section below on the required metrics for this category.

4) Western Grazing Lands

This geography includes grasslands, shrublands, and pasturelands in the Western United States (see map here). Key objectives for this category include:

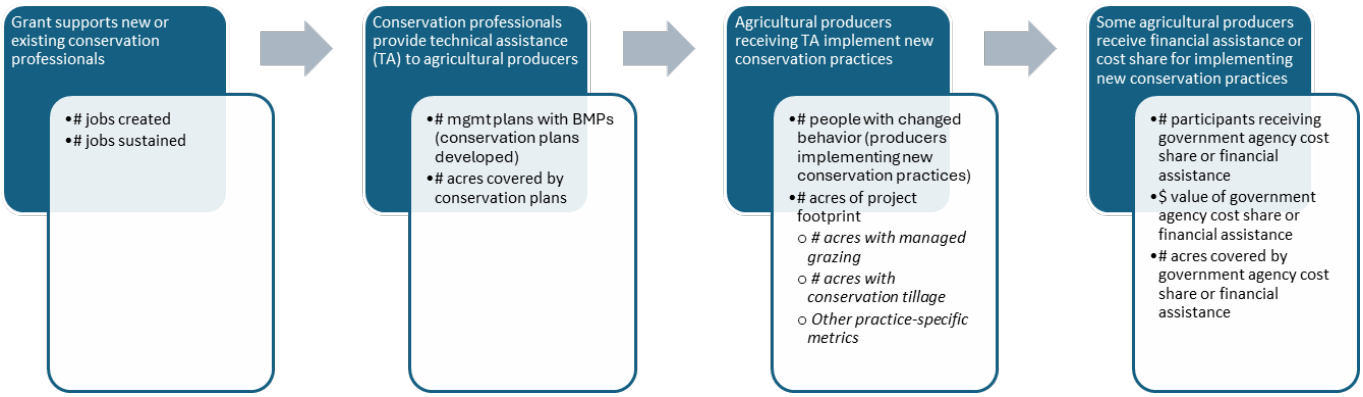
- Sustain and enhance conservation and economic values associated with working grasslands, pasturelands, and shrublands.
- Improve soil health on grazing lands.
- Enhance habitat quality and connectivity for birds, pollinators, and other species that depend on grassland complexes in the region.

Priority strategies include grazing management and habitat enhancement. Special priority will be given to projects that conserve and restore intact grazing landscapes, reduce the expansion of conifers and exotic annual grasses, restore wet meadows and other mesic areas, and increase drought resilience of farm operations. Successful projects will support the delivery of the NRCS Western Water and Working Lands Framework for Conservation Action, Sagebrush Biome Framework for Conservation Action, Great Plains Grasslands Biome Framework, and Working Lands for Wildlife Southwestern Willow Flycatcher.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure the consistency of data collected across the grant portfolio, the CPP application includes a list of standard metric options for describing project impacts and reporting outcomes (Table 1). There is a set of required metrics which all projects must include in their proposals. In addition to setting goals for and reporting against required metrics, applicants should also select metrics most relevant to their projects, i.e. projects providing technical assistance for grazing should report against the acres of managed grazing metric. The flowchart below describes the hierarchy of metrics collected from CPP projects.

As part of interim and final performance reporting, grant recipients may be required to submit additional field-level implementation data using a template to be provided by NFWF. NFWF may use this information, as well as information in the proposal's Easygrants metrics, to estimate and track anticipated and actual environmental outcomes.



ALL applicants are required to include the following metrics (see flowchart above):

1. **# jobs created AND/OR # jobs sustained**
2. **# participants receiving government agency cost share or financial assistance**
3. **Dollar value of government agency cost share or financial assistance**
4. **Acres covered by government agency cost share or financial assistance**
5. **# people with changed behavior** *(to report # of farmers changing practices)*
6. **Acreage of project footprint**
7. **# of mgmt plans with BMPs** *(to report # of conservation plans developed)*
8. **# of acres covered by conservation plans**

Projects in the Great Lakes Basin are required to include the following additional metrics:

1. **Acres with enhanced nutrient mgt**
2. **Lbs N avoided (annually)**
3. **Lbs P avoided (annually)**
4. **Lbs sediment avoided (annually)**

Additional requirements for ALL applicants:

1. **ALL starting values must be zero**

Table 1. Metrics available for selection in the application with REQUIRED notes.

Strategy	Metric Name *REQUIRED for ALL applicants **REQUIRED for Great Lakes applicants	Instructions REQUIRED for ALL selected metrics
Capacity, Outreach, Incentives	**# jobs created***	Enter the # of individuals hired to directly work on the project (non-volunteers). Jobs should be directly engaged in grant activities, funded by the grant, and shouldn't have existed prior to the grant. The starting value should be zero and target value should be a whole number. In the NOTES section, provide the FTE for the jobs created.
	# jobs sustained*	Enter the # of paid jobs that are partially or fully sustained through this grant. Jobs should have existed prior to the grant, be funded by the grant, and be directly engaged in project activities. The starting value should be zero and target value should be a whole number. In the NOTES section, provide the FTE for the jobs sustained.
	# participants receiving government agency cost share or financial assistance*	Enter the number of agricultural producers that enrolled in government cost share or financial assistance programs as a result of the project's technical assistance activities. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP) and how you will track enrollment. This should be equal to or less than the "# people with changed behavior" metric.
	Dollar 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 received by agricultural producers as a result of the project's technical assistance activities. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP) and how the value was estimated.
	Acres covered by government agency cost share or financial assistance*	Enter the number of acres enrolled in government agency cost share or financial assistance programs as a result of the project's technical assistance activities. In the NOTES section, specify which program(s) (e.g., NRCS EQIP). This value should be equal to or less than BOTH the "Acreage of project footprint" and "Acres covered by conservation plans" metric.
	# people with changed behavior* *to report # of agricultural producers implementing conservation practices*	Enter the number of producers implementing new conservation practices with or without federal, state, local, or private financial assistance. This should be equal to or greater than the "# of participants receiving gov't agency cost share or financial assistance" metric.
	# workshops, webinars, meetings	Enter the number of workshops, webinars, and meetings held.
	# people reached	Enter the number of participants who attended the workshop, webinar, and/or meetings.

Habitat Management	**Acreage of project footprint***	Enter the total number of unique acres where one or more conservation practices were implemented. Only count an acre once, even if multiple conservation practices will be applied on that same acre, or if a practice will be implemented on the same acre in multiple years. For crop management projects involving wheat, please indicate the total project acres in active wheat rotation in the NOTES section.
	Acres with conservation tillage	Enter the number of cropland acres with conservation tillage practices. Acres with conservation tillage under this metric should comply with NRCS Conservation Practice Standards - No Till (329) and/or Reduced Till (345). Please describe conservation tillage practices in the NOTES section.
	Acres with cover crops	Enter the number of cropland acres with cover crop practices. Acres with cover crops under this metric should comply with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard - Cover Crop (340). Please describe the cover crop practices in the NOTES section.
	Acres with enhanced nutrient mgt**	Enter the number of cropland acres with enhanced nutrient management practices other than or in addition to conservation tillage or cover crops. Acres with enhanced nutrient management practices under this metric should comply with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard - Nutrient Management (590). Please describe the nutrient management practices in the NOTES section. **Projects in the Great Lakes Basin ONLY:** Enter the number of cropland acres with enhanced nutrient management practices and/or under a conservation plan with nutrient management practices (may include practices such as soil testing, precision application, subsurface application etc.). Please describe the nutrient management practices in the NOTES section.
	Acres of crop rotation	Enter the number of acres on which a resource conserving crop rotation is implemented to build soil health, reduce erosion, and improve water quality. Acres under this metric should comply with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard - Conservation Crop Rotation (328).

Habitat Management	Acres with managed grazing	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., promoting plant growth above and below ground, improving wildlife habitat, and maximizing soil health through grazing approaches that optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of associated grazing infrastructure). Acres under this metric should comply with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard - Prescribed Grazing (528). Please describe the grazing practices in the NOTES section.
	Lbs N avoided (annually)**	Enter the amount of nitrogen prevented from entering waterways annually and indicate method of calculating reduction in NOTES section.
	Lbs P avoided (annually)**	Enter the amount of phosphorous prevented from entering waterways annually and indicate method of calculating reduction in NOTES section.
	Lbs sediment avoided (annually)**	Enter the amount of sediment prevented from entering waterways annually and indicate method of calculating reduction in NOTES section.
	Acres burned	Enter the number of acres prescribed fire was applied to. Acres burned under this metric should comply with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard - Prescribed Burning (338). In the NOTES section, specify the average frequency (in years) at which prescribed burning is expected to occur in the future, and the vegetation being burned (shrubland, grassland, cropland, Phragmites marsh).
	Acres with improved irrigation	Enter the number of acres with improved irrigation water management practices implemented to reduce water and improve energy efficiency. Acres under this metric should comply with the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards - Irrigation Pipeline (430), Irrigation System, Microirrigation (441), Irrigation System, Sprinkler (442), Pumping Plant (533), or Irrigation Water Management (449).
	Acre feet of water conserved	Enter the number of acre feet of water conserved and indicate method of calculating water conservation in the NOTES section.
Habitat Restoration	Land restoration – Acres restored *for grassland restoration projects*	Enter the number of acres of GRASSLAND habitat restored. Grassland acres restored under this metric should comply with the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards - Conservation Cover (327), Forage and Biomass Planting (512), Silvopasture Establishment (381), Range Planting (550), or Wildlife Habitat Planting (420). In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grassland,

Habitat Restoration		shrubland, herbaceous wetland, wet meadow) and post-restoration (grassland).
	Wetland restoration – Acres restored	Enter the number of acres of WETLAND habitat restored. Wetland acres restored under this metric should comply with the NRCS Conservation Practice Standard - Wetland Restoration (657). In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to and following restoration (barren, cropland, deciduous forest, coniferous forest, shrubland, grassland, herbaceous wetland, wooded wetland, wet meadow).
	Land restoration – Acres of field buffers created	Enter the number of acres of FIELD BUFFER created. Acres of field buffer created under this metric should comply with the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards - Field Border (386), Filter Strip (393), Contour Buffer Strips (332), Grassed Waterway (412), Vegetative Barrier (601), Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment (380), Hedgerow Planting (422), or Herbaceous Wind Barriers (603). In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), and the dominant vegetation being planted (grassland, deciduous forest, shrubland, wooded wetland).
	Riparian restoration – Acres of riparian areas restored	Enter the number of riparian acres restored, including riparian buffers. Riparian acres restored under this metric should comply with the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards - Riparian Herbaceous Cover (390), Critical Area Planting (342), or Riparian Forest Buffer (391). In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland), the dominant vegetation being planted (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Wet meadow), and the average width of the riparian buffer.
	Land restoration – Acres of trees planted	Enter the number of acres of TREES planted. Acres of trees planted under this metric should comply with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard - Tree/Shrub Establishment (612). In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), the average number of trees per acre planted, and forest type (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, swamp--either broadleaf or conifer, shrub).
	Acres restored on private lands through silvicultural manipulation	Enter the total acres of existing forest that will be restored through silvicultural manipulation. Acres restored under this metric should comply with NRCS Conservation Practice Standard - Forest Stand Improvement (666).

	Land restoration – Removal of Invasives – Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored by removal of INVASIVE SPECIES. Acres restored under this metric should comply with the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards - Brush Management (314), Herbaceous Weed Control (315). In the NOTES section, specify: the vegetation type being removed (herbaceous, shrub, or tree), average frequency (in years) the treatment is expected to occur in the future, and whether the removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes, No).
	Acres with restored hydrology	Enter the number of acres with restored hydrology. Acres restored under this metric should comply with the following NRCS Conservation Practice Standards - Restoration and Management of Rare or Declining Habitats (643), Wetland Restoration (657).
Planning, Research, Monitoring	**# mgmt plans with BMPs*** *(to report # of conservation plans developed)*	Enter the number of completed site-specific conservation plans in which Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated. Conservation plans should follow NRCS guidelines and enable producers to meet eligibility requirements for USDA NRCS conservation programs.
	# Acres covered by conservation plans*	Enter the number of acres that are receiving conservation planning and other technical assistance to help producers meet eligibility requirements for USDA NRCS conservation programs and other Federal, State, and local conservation programs.

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. To be competitive, applicant organizations must demonstrate capacity and experience commensurate with the scale of the project being proposed and the funding being requested.
- Individuals, federal government agencies, and for-profit entities are not eligible to apply for grant funding.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- Grant funds cannot be used to provide technical assistance for Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) and Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities (PCSC) projects, which already have dedicated, USDA-funded technical assistance budgets.
- Grant funds from NRCS cannot be used to provide financial assistance to agricultural producers, though projects may leverage other funding for this purpose. Financial assistance means direct payments to agricultural producers to perform or implement conservation practices, including

payments for costs like materials, equipment, labor, etc. The prohibition on financial assistance to producers also applies to the direct purchase of materials, equipment, labor, etc. required for producers to implement practices. Successful projects will provide technical assistance as a means to help agricultural producers access financial assistance and cost share payments through NRCS Farm Bill programs.

- **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 are strictly prohibited from being used for a number of reasons to include, for example, political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities, or in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. See OMB Uniform Guidance for additional information.
- 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.

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:

Conservation Outcomes	Budget	Technical
• Alignment with program goals and priorities • Alignment with NRCS goals and priorities • Quantifiable performance metrics • Appropriate monitoring of activities and outcomes • Partnership & community engagement • Project long-term sustainability	• Allowable and reasonable costs • Matching contributions • Cost effective	• Technically sound and feasible • Logical and achievable work plan and timeline • Engages technical experts • Accurate spatial data • Sound compliance approach (permits, NEPA, QAQC) • Past grantee success • Transferable

Priorities – Project addresses one or more of the funding opportunity priorities and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success.

NRCS Coordination – Project is in alignment with goals, resource conservation priorities, and capacity needs. Applicants should confer with the NRCS State Conservationist and their staff in the state in which the project is located. A list of NRCS state contacts can be found **here.**

Partnership and Community Impact – The applicant organization partners and engages collaboratively with 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. 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 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.

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.

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 multiple partners are encouraged and will make proposals more competitive during the review process.

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.

Spatial Data – Project spatial data submitted to NFWF's online mapping tool accurately represent the location(s) of conservation activity(ies) at the time of proposal submission. Successful projects will be required to submit improved spatial data for each conservation activity within the period of performance as necessary.

OTHER

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), and carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions).

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. Requests for monthly advances will not be considered.

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 receipt from the agency. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through NFWF's Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in NFWF's 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 *Conservation Partners Program 2025* 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 funding opportunity, please contact:

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202-938-0640

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202-595-2657

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 #, email address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.