



NFWF



ConocoPhillips

Scotts Miracle-Gro
FOUNDATION



MONARCH BUTTERFLY AND POLLINATORS CONSERVATION FUND

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 of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information regarding the [Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund](#).

Applicant Webinar [[Register Here](#)]

Full Proposal Due Date

Review Period

Awards Announced

May 28, 3:00 PM Eastern Time

July 8, 11:59 PM Eastern Time

July to December

Early December

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks proposals to advance pollinator conservation. The goal of the [Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund](#) (Pollinator Fund) is to protect, conserve, and increase habitat for the monarch butterfly and other native insect pollinators.

Projects should align with NFWF's [Monarch Butterfly Business Plan](#). The most competitive projects will demonstrate clear benefits to both monarch butterfly and additional at-risk native insect pollinator species. Special consideration will be given to projects benefiting rusty patched bumble bee, Franklin's bumble bee, Karner blue butterfly, Dakota skipper, Poweshiek skipperling, and Mitchell's satyr.

GRANT AWARD INFORMATION

Grant awards will range from \$200,000 to \$300,000. Funding will be awarded for projects up to two years in length following finalization of the grant agreement. Over the past five funding cycles, the average application success rate was 41%.

Funding is provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bayer Crop Science, ConocoPhillips, and The Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation.

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. The project narrative should include a clear timetable or schedule for project completion. Significant project deliverables and outcomes are expected to be achieved within the first year. The start date indicated in the proposal should not precede January 1, 2026.

Matching funds are not required. However, the ratio of matching contributions offered to grant funding requested is one criterion considered during the review process, and projects that offer a 1:1 match ratio with contributions from non-federal sources will be more competitive.

Applicants are also encouraged to indicate relevant federal contributions to demonstrate the scope of partner investment in the project. Matching contributions must be spent or applied between the project start and end dates indicated in the proposal.

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. The cost of land acquisition or easement may also qualify as leverage for a project involving work at the protected site. 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](#). NFWF will not consider the portion of landowner expenses required as cost share to obtain funding on Farm Bill projects as partner contributions to match.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

1. Grant funding may be awarded in the following eligible states: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.
2. Grants will be targeted to projects in the North Core, South Core, West Core and Overwintering Monarch Conservation Units, and four states in the South Exterior Unit including Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, or South Carolina (Figure 1).
3. West of the Rocky Mountains, priority will be given to projects on or adjacent to the following: monarch butterfly overwintering sites, BLM lands, and USFS lands.
4. The North Core, South Core, and West Core and Overwintering Monarch Conservation Units are viewable online through the [Monarch Butterfly Digital Business Plan](#).

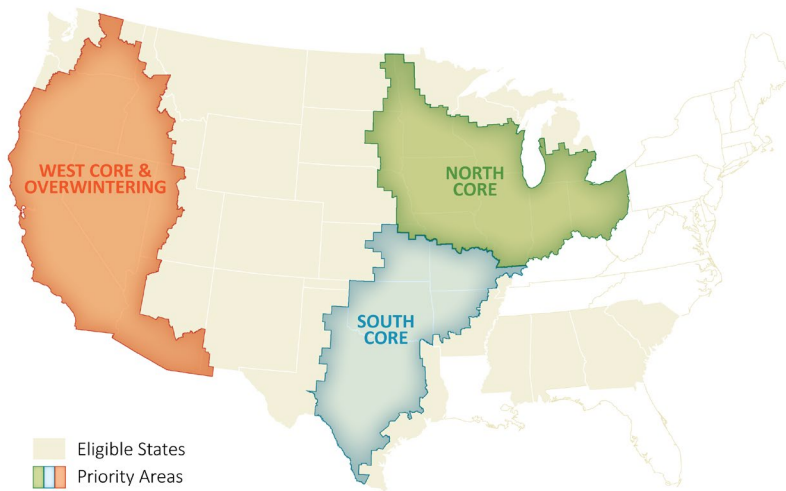


Figure 1 (left). Focal Geographies.

These focal geographies include partial Monarch Conservation Units defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They represent priority, but not exclusive, areas for NFWF investments in monarch conservation.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund supports on-the-ground work to increase the quality, quantity, and connectivity of habitat for the monarch butterfly and other native insect pollinators. Grant funding will support the following two strategies:

- A. Restore and enhance pollinator habitat, with an emphasis on regionally appropriate milkweed and a diversity of native nectar plants.
- B. Increase native seed and seedling supply, with an emphasis on improving the sustainability and affordability of regionally appropriate, local ecotypes (see Definitions section).

All proposals must specifically address how the proposed project will directly and measurably contribute to the accomplishment of the Pollinator Fund's goals as outlined in NFWF's [Monarch Butterfly Business Plan](#). As such, all proposals must provide the number of acres restored or enhanced as a result of the project.

Proposals must include plans to restore or enhance a minimum of 80 acres in California or 500 acres in all other eligible states. For project ideas related to overwintering sites in California that anticipate preserving, restoring, or improving less than 80 acres, please contact Senior Program Manager Crystal Boyd (crystal.boyd@nfwf.org) to discuss before applying. Acres may be counted from multiple sites; the sites do not need to be contiguous. Since 2015, successful proposals have included a median of 1,000 acres and an average of 2,070 acres restored or enhanced.

If a project is expected to benefit multiple at-risk native insect pollinator species, the applicant should list the relevant species and how they will benefit. Priority will be given to projects that benefit the monarch butterfly and one or more native insect pollinator species that are federally listed, candidate, or proposed native insect pollinators. Projects proposed to benefit other at-risk native insect pollinators must specify habitat needs for those species and how the proposed work will support their breeding, nectaring, nesting, or other habitat needs.

Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, provide technical assistance to landowners and land managers, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes. Additionally, projects should engage

community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) to help design, implement, and maintain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award.

Applicants should define a step-by-step restoration plan including site preparation, equipment used, planting techniques, size of the project area, description of target native plant community, and maintenance plan (e.g., prescribed burning, mowing, grazing schedules).

If preparing a proposal that includes collecting or propagating native plants, applicants should describe the intended use of the seed or seedlings and how planting success will be monitored. Giveaways of milkweed seeds or seedlings are discouraged unless significant staff time is committed for follow-up, support, monitoring, and mapping plantings with the milkweed recipients.

Plantings must include at least one species of regionally appropriate milkweed. To help meet the nutritional needs of a broad range of pollinator species, plantings must also provide at least three native blooming nectar species (in addition to milkweed) during each of the following periods: spring, summer, and fall.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Pollinator Fund provides a list of metrics in Easygrants from which to choose for future reporting. We ask that applicants select the most relevant metrics from this list for their project. All possible program metrics are shown in the table below.

- **All proposals must include Acres Restored or Acres Under Improved Management as one of the metrics. Proposals must include plans to restore or enhance a minimum of 80 acres in California or 500 acres in all other eligible states. For project ideas related to overwintering sites in California that anticipate preserving, restoring, or improving less than 80 acres, please contact Senior Program Manager Crystal Boyd (crystal.boyd@nfwf.org) to discuss before applying.**
- **The starting value for all metrics must be entered as zero.**

Please contact Senior Program Manager Crystal Boyd (crystal.boyd@nfwf.org) if you have questions about which metrics best apply to your project.

Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Acres Restored*	Enter the total # of acres restored. Restoration means returning integrity to a site where native habitat has been lost or degraded. E.g., planting native plant community or providing technical assistance to develop a conservation plan designed to <u>establish</u> wildlife habitat. If a project is enhancing already existing monarch habitat, use the metric "acres under improved management" instead. A project acre should be reported using only 1 of these 2 metrics.
Acres Under Improved	Enter total # of acres improved. Improved means changing specific ecological function(s) or the vegetative successional stage of a site to provide additional

Management*	benefit for monarchs. E.g., conservation mowing, haying, grazing, burning, invasive plant species control, inter-seeding existing habitat, or providing technical assistance to develop a conservation plan designed to <u>enhance</u> wildlife habitat. A project acre should be reported using only 1 of these 2 metrics.
# Workshops, Webinars, Meetings	Enter the number of workshops, webinars, and/or meetings hosted.
# People Reached	Enter the number of individuals or partners <u>directly</u> engaged. Do not include media impressions (number of newsletters sent, social media posts viewed, etc.).
# Plans Developed	Enter the number of conservation plans created.
# Jobs Created	Enter the number of new Full Time Employees (FTEs) hired.
# Jobs Sustained	Enter the number of existing Full Time Employees (FTEs) sustained.
Pounds Harvested	Enter the number of pounds of <u>milkweed</u> (<i>Asclepias</i> spp.) seed collected. Only include pounds of clean seed (i.e., seeds exclusive of inert matter, invasive/weed seeds, and all other seeds). May include fractions of a pound.
# Seedlings Propagated	Enter the number of <u>milkweed</u> (<i>Asclepias</i> spp.) plugs propagated. This includes the number of new milkweed plants successfully established to be transplanted for use in current or future monarch habitat restoration/enhancement sites.

*For reporting purposes, each project acre should be reported only once as either “restored” or “under improved management” based on the condition of the acre relative to monarch butterflies at the beginning of project implementation (see Definitions section).

DEFINITIONS

- **At-risk Native Insect Pollinator Species:** Native insect pollinator species listed, designated as candidates for listing, or proposed for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act.
- **Local Ecotype:** A locally adapted population of a species that has a distinctive limit of tolerance to environmental factors.
- **Clean Seed:** Seeds exclusive of inert matter, invasive/weed seeds, and all other seeds.
- **Restore*:** Habitat restoration involves the manipulation of an area with the goal of returning integrity to a site where native habitat has been lost or degraded. Examples may include, but are not limited to, planting native plant communities that likely existed previously on the

site. For example, conservation plans developed with technical assistance would reference appropriate NRCS practice standards designed to establish wildlife habitat.

- **Under Improved Management*:** Habitat under improved management (i.e., enhanced) involves the manipulation of an area to change (heighten, intensify, or improve) specific ecological function(s) or the vegetative successional stage of the project site to provide additional benefits to monarchs and other pollinators. Habitat under improved management (i.e., enhanced) includes implementation or modification of land management practices such as mowing, haying, grazing, prescribed burning, invasive plant species control, forest health management activities, and interseeding existing habitat with milkweeds and forbs. For example, conservation plans developed with technical assistance would reference appropriate NRCS practice standards designed to enhance wildlife habitat.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include nonprofit 501(c) organizations, U.S. federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, tribal governments and organizations, and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations.

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 (see table below). Project selections may also be based on other considerations, such as availability of funding, geographic balance, and balance among project types and grant size.

Conservation Outcomes	Budget	Technical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with program goals and priorities • Quantifiable performance metrics • Appropriate monitoring of activities and outcomes • Partnership & community engagement • Project long-term sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowable and reasonable costs • Matching contributions • Cost effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

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, spent, and acquired 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. Matching contributions are to be spent/applied between the start and end dates specified in the proposal.

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 (i.e., site-specific shapefiles of the footprint for each project activity) for each conservation activity within the period of performance as necessary.

Monitoring – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success, adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise, and assure conservation efforts are effective and strategic. Preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate plans to document site condition and monarch usage prior to project implementation. For example, please note if [Integrated Monarch Monitoring Program protocols](#) or similar monitoring efforts have been or will be employed at project sites.

OTHER

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- 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.
- 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 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.

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 Acknowledgment 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.

Monitoring – NFWF may implement independent monitoring efforts in the future to measure the environmental outcomes from projects funded under this solicitation. Award recipients may be asked to facilitate granting of access to project sites for NFWF or its designees for future environmental monitoring purposes.

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through the 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:

Crystal Boyd

Senior Manager of Pollinator Programs

crystal.boyd@nfwf.org

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, name of program to which you are applying (Monarch Butterfly and Pollinators Conservation Fund), and a description of the issue.