



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS TEMPLATE**

### **California Forests and Watersheds - Wildfires Restoration Grant Program 2025 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (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 [\*California Forests and Watersheds Program\*](#).

RFP Opens	08/04/2025 - 09/05/2025
Applicant Webinar	08/04/2025, 10:00AM, Pacific Time
<b>Full Proposal Due Date</b>	<b>10/03/2025, 8:59PM, Pacific Time</b>
Review Period	10/13/2025 – 11/13/2025
Awards Announced	1/15/2026

#### **OVERVIEW**

NFWF, in close cooperation with the Angeles National Forest is pleased to announce the California Forests and Watersheds – Wildfires Restoration Program for the recovery of Angeles National Forest (ANF) lands and watersheds degraded from the influences of past wildfire events. This funding opportunity is applicable to only the following wildfires:

Angeles National Forest: **Copper** (2002) and **Sayre** (2008) fires.

The major goals of this competitive grant program are to:

- 1) Increase the pace and scale of restoration to address impacts from these fires.
- 2) Provide sustainable and lasting ecological benefits to the ANF.
- 3) Engage in efficient, strategic, and innovative solutions to improve forest health and resilience such as Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) barrier installation and invasive species removal along roads within Copper/Sayre Fire affected areas.



4) Encourage ‘shared-stewardship’ of USFS lands through expanded partnership and cooperation.

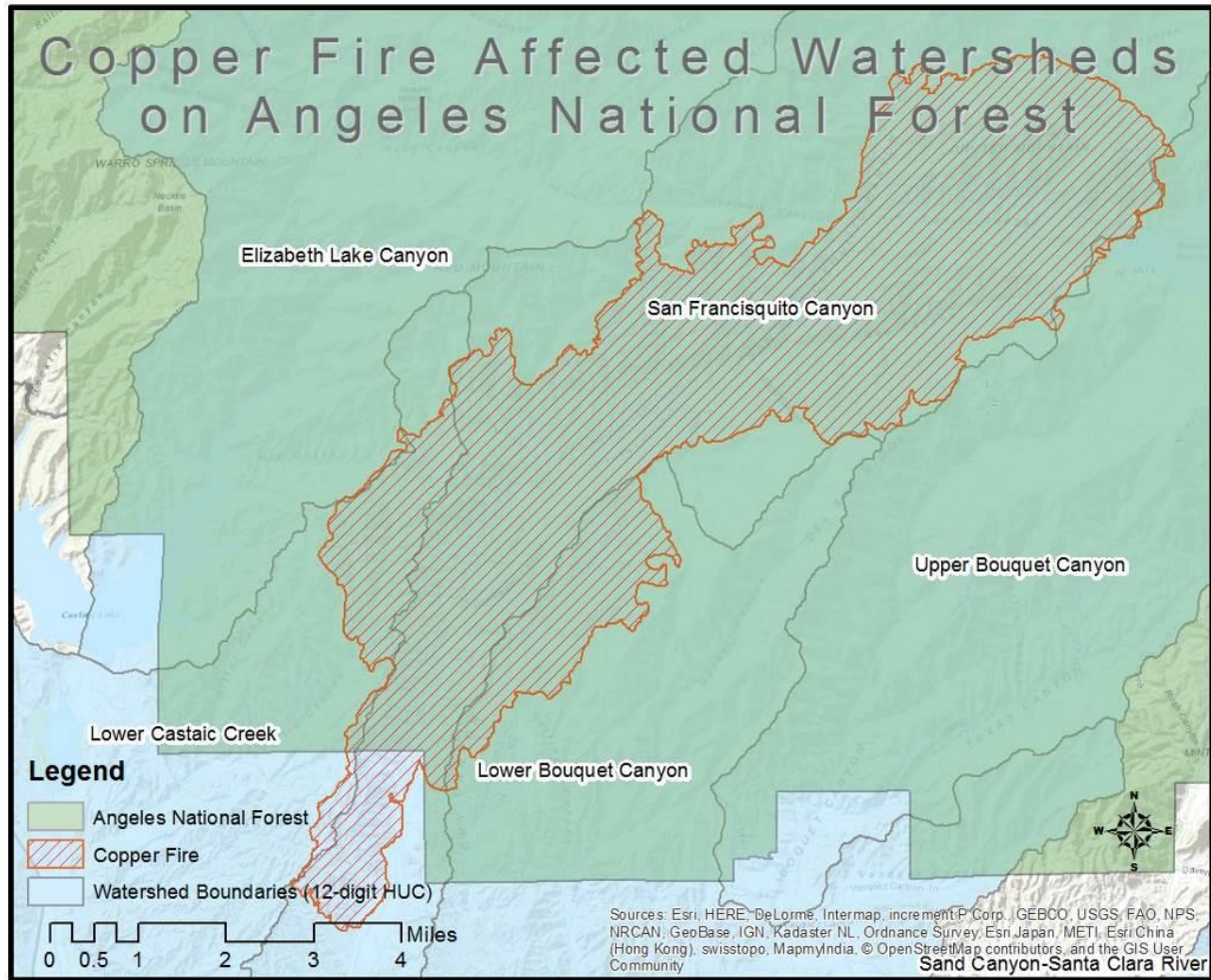
The 2024 Copper and Sayre Fire Restoration Strategy (Exhibit A) developed for the ANF is anchored around the existing large-scale regional fire restoration programs and will help frame the restoration activities in the broader context of the watersheds in which they are located.

## GRANT AWARD INFORMATION

- ☐ Proposals requesting funds in excess of \$350,000 may be considered, however your proposal should include clear justification. Applicants who intend to request greater than \$350,000 are encouraged to discuss your proposal with the NFWF Program Manager Jorge Nunez prior to submittal.
- ☐ Matching funds are required and will be a factor in the proposal evaluation.
  - o **Projects are expected to provide at least 50% non-federal match to be competitive.**
  - o **Highly competitive projects will meet or exceed a 100% non-federal match.**
- ☐ Proposals not meeting the match expectations may be considered on a limited case-by-case basis and are still encouraged to apply. Applicants who don’t anticipate meeting the match requirements are encouraged to discuss your proposal with NFWF Program Manager Jorge Nunez prior to submittal ([Jorge.Nunez@nfwf.org](mailto:Jorge.Nunez@nfwf.org)).
- ☐ Matching contributions must be relevant and related to the project’s work. Match may include non-federal 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. Please review the NFWF Indirect Cost Policy for Applicants <http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/pages/indirect-policy.aspx> for specific information about using indirect costs as match.
- ☐ All project costs must be incurred within the project period of performance. Generally, projects awarded through this funding opportunity are expected to be completed within 24 months of the grant award, however, exceptions may be given depending on need and activities proposed. Some larger-scale, longer duration projects may warrant either an extended period of performance, or developing the project into distinct phases, to be funded over separate funding cycles. Large-scale projects that require multiple funding cycles should include a request and justification in their proposal. For more guidance on project start and end dates, see the Applicant Tip Sheet.
- ☐ Applicants may submit more than one proposal

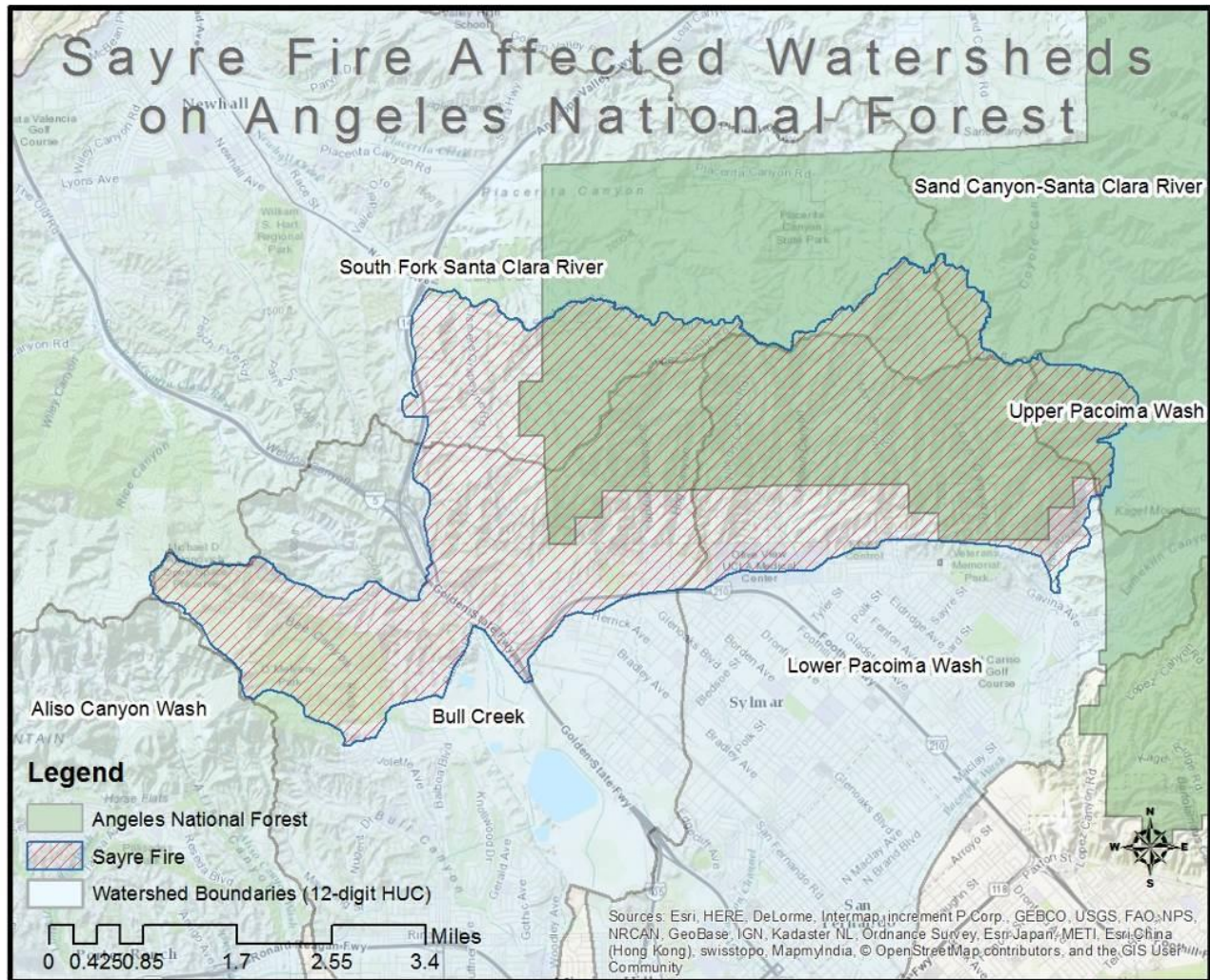
## GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

This grant program focuses on watersheds and ecosystems affected by the Copper and Sayre fires. Figures 1 & 2 below identify the extent of those fires in the context of the Angeles National Forest. Project activities are eligible in the affected watersheds, provided the activity has a direct nexus to a need resulting from, or exacerbated by, the fires.



**Figure 1.** Copper Fire affected watersheds eligible for project activities





**Figure 2.** Sayre Fire affected watersheds eligible for project activities

## PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Grant funding will be awarded to planning and/or implementation projects designed to advance fire recovery and improve ecological resilience in the Angeles National Forest. To be eligible for funding:

- ☐ Projects must conduct, or inform, the improvement, protection, or rehabilitation of ecosystems and watersheds for and on Federal National Forest System lands impacted by these fires.
- ☐ Project proposals must clearly describe the need for the proposed project as rendered necessary by the impacts of the fire where activities are focused.
- ☐ Project goals, objectives, and activities must provide a direct and practical contribution toward one or more General Programmatic Strategies (described below), with a strong preference to on-the-ground, implementable actions.



Competitive proposals will address at least one of the programmatic strategies described below. Eligible projects include a wide scope of potential activities across a variety of strategies and focuses. Further details related to the goals and priorities of this fire recovery program are described within the 2024 Copper and Sayre Fire Restoration Strategy (Exhibit A).

**For current information on priority projects within the California Forests and Watersheds - Wildfires Restoration Grant Program, please contact NFWF Program Manager, Jorge Nunez ([jorge.nunez@nfwf.org](mailto:jorge.nunez@nfwf.org)).** However, this grant program welcomes any project proposals that seek practical and innovative approaches to landscape and species recovery and management as it relates to the fires addressed through this program.

## **General Programmatic Strategies**

### **Watershed Restoration and Management**

- 1) Improve hydrologic connectivity and aquatic organism passage.
- 2) Remove aquatic invasive species threatening aquatic habitat or sensitive species.
- 3) Reduce pollutant loading and restore and/or enhance water quality and instream flow.
- 4) Create, maintain, or improve in-stream, riparian, or wetland habitat.

### **Forest and Upland Restoration and Management**

- 1) Evaluate forest ecosystems, such as oak woodlands, native grasslands, upland conifer, and chaparral and coastal sage scrub and develop effective treatment/restoration actions.
- 2) Harvest native seed and/or propagate native plants, and maintain, improve, or restore native ecosystems communities and resilient landscapes.
- 3) Manage and improve ecological resilience to future fire through invasive vegetation treatment, fuel break maintenance, vegetation community age-class structure restoration, and strategic fuels reduction.

### **Species Management**

- 1) Evaluate and/or restore or improve conditions relative to a specific species, ecological community, or habitat type. Species of interest include but are not limited to bigcone Douglas-fir, steelhead, unarmored threespine stickleback, California red-legged frog, arroyo toad, southwestern willow flycatcher, and California condor.
- 2) Inform decisions and actions related to management and recovery of species/natural communities within fire affected watersheds.

### **Public Use Engagement and Management**

- 1) Evaluate conditions and provide management recommendations for trails, roads, campsites, fuel breaks, and other areas affected by fire or fire suppression activity.
- 2) Maintain, improve, and restore trails, roads, campsites, and other areas affected by fire or fire suppression activity.
- 3) Restore areas impacted by non-USFS system/user-created trails, roads, or campsites.
- 4) Develop educational and engagement opportunities to interpret the natural and cultural history on USFS land; integrate the role, impact, and history of fire in these Forest landscapes.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the California Forests and Watersheds Program has a list of metrics in Easygrants (NFWF's web-based application platform) for applicants to choose from for future NFWF reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (Table 1). Where multiple metrics could apply for the same activity, select the metric that is most representative of the outcome. Avoid using the same value across multiple metrics unless they are clearly discernable from each other. For instance, if your project conducts 50 acres of invasive weed removal, only count the activity under 'Habitat Restoration – Removal of Invasives – acres restored'. If your project conducts 50 acres of invasive weed removal and installs and maintains native plants after the invasive removal, you may include a second metric of 'Habitat Restoration – Land Restoration – Acres Restored'. If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact NFWF's Western Forests Program Manager Jorge Nunez to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project metrics should account for those activities that will be conducted with NFWF funding, and the associated match, during the project's period of performance. In addition to the Easygrants metrics, USFS may request additional or more detailed reporting.

<b>Project Activity</b>	<b>Recommended Metric</b>	<b>Additional Guidance</b>
Volunteer Participation	# volunteers participating	Enter the number of volunteers participating in projects.
Outreach/Education/Technical Assistance	# people reached	Enter the number of people reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities.
Research	# studies completed to inform mgmt	Enter the number of studies completed whose findings are used to adapt management/inform mgmt decisions
Research	Acres assessed for improved management	Enter the number of acres assessed.
Restoration Planning/Design/Permitting	# E&D plans developed	Enter the number of Engineering and Design plans, and/or compliance documents developed. Generally there will be 1 per milestone, e.g., 10% design, 30% design, sampling design plan, final report/data compilation.
Instream Restoration	Miles restored	Enter the number of miles restored.

Fish Passage Improvements	# passage barriers rectified	In the notes section of this metric, please indicate the number and type of barrier that is being removed (i.e., dam, culvert, etc.).
Fish Passage Improvements	Miles of stream opened	Enter the number of miles of stream made accessible to aquatic organism passage. NFWF prefers that this metric indicate the miles of upstream habitat until the next barrier upstream (or end of flowline) as well as the miles of downstream habitat until the next barrier downstream using PADnew.
Riparian Restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of riparian acres restored. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), the % of vegetation on the pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%), the dominant vegetation being planted (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass), the buffer width, and the acres. DO NOT include instream restoration miles in this measurement.
Wetland Restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres of WETLAND habitat restored. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to restoration.
Land Restoration	Acres restored on public lands through silvicultural manipulation	Enter the number of acres restored on public lands through on-the-ground fuels and vegetation management treatments such as thinning, limbing, tree removal, etc. In the



		NOTES, indicate the dominant forest type (Aspen-birch, Maple-beech-birch, Douglas-fir, Lodgepole pine, Ponderosa pine, Mixed conifer, Oak-hickory, Oak-pine, Spruce-balsam fir, White-red-jack pine, Redwood), the 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).
Land restoration	Acres of trees planted	Enter the number of acres of TREES planted. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), and the average number of trees per acre planted.
Removal of invasives	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres restored by removal of INVASIVE SPECIES. In the NOTES section, specify: the vegetation type being removed (Forest understory, Junipers, Shrubs, Grasses and forbs), the desired dominant vegetation state at the project site (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass), 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).
BMP Implementation for Road Improvements	Miles of road improved	Enter the number of miles of road improved, maintained, or decommissioned. In the notes,



		state the BMP type(s) and expected environmental benefits.
Erosion control	Lbs. of sediment avoided	Enter the amount of sediment prevented from entering the system annually
Plant Cultivation	# seedlings propagated	Enter the number of seedlings propagated
Seed Harvesting	Lbs. of seed harvested	Enter the number of pounds of seeds collected, may be estimated from bushels of cones collected
Habitat Management: Prescribed Burning	Acres burned	Enter the number of acres that have been treated by prescribed burning. In the NOTES section, specify whether it is private or public land, the average frequency (in years) at which prescribed burning is expected to occur in the future, the dominant vegetation being burned (forest, shrubland, grassland), and, if forest, whether trees have been planted in past 10 years (Yes, No), and the type of forest (Aspen-birch, Maple-beech-birch, Douglas-fir, Lodgepole pine, Ponderosa pine, Mixed conifer, Oak-hickory, Oak-pine, Spruce-balsam fir, White-red-jack pine, Redwood).

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- ☐ Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state, local, and municipal government agencies, Indian tribes, educational institutions, and eligible federal agencies (research-based: USGS or USFS Research Station).
- ☐ Ineligible applicants include businesses, unincorporated individuals, and international organizations.

## Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- NFWF funds and matching contributions must not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds shall 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with program goals and priorities</li> <li>Quantifiable performance metrics</li> <li>Appropriate monitoring of activities and outcomes</li> <li>Partnership &amp; community engagement</li> <li>Project long-term sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allowable and reasonable costs</li> <li>Matching contributions</li> <li>Cost effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technically sound and feasible</li> <li>Logical and achievable work plan and timeline</li> <li>Engages technical experts</li> <li>Accurate spatial data</li> <li>Sound compliance approach (permits, NEPA, QAQC)</li> <li>Past grantee success</li> <li>Transferable</li> </ul>

**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. 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 range of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.

**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 the 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**

### **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 shall 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 must 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 award 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, the Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and the 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 sufficient 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.

**Quality Assurance** – If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation ([www.epa.gov/quality](http://www.epa.gov/quality)). Applicants should budget sufficient time and resources to complete this task.

**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.

**Working with the Forest Service** – NFWF and the USFS welcome and encourage all proposals that meet the goals and priorities of this program. As this program solicits projects that will occur upon, and to the benefit of, USFS land, it is important to note that the USFS may have specific policies, protocols, and requirements related to some or all project activities that must be met before they can be executed. These requirements will differ depending on the project proposed. Examples of such incorporation may include explicit compliance with all pertinent laws and regulations (e.g., NEPA), integration of performance standards, adoption of specific best management practices or design standards (such as stated in the Angeles National Forest Land Management Plan and other USFS management documents), adherence to data deliverable/reporting formats, etc. In certain cases, not all requirements will be known at the time of application, however the applicant's proposal will benefit from identifying as many of these conditions as possible, in order to develop the most appropriate estimates of the project scope, timeline, and budget.

Please note, successful grant recipients are not considered volunteers to the Forest Service and are therefore not subject to Forest Service Volunteer Agreements and the benefits and restrictions those agreements provide. Grantees are ultimately responsible for the execution of their project and assume all legal liability for their actions and the well-being of their participants (which may themselves be volunteers to the organization/project).

NFWF acknowledges the many influencing factors that may affect project timelines and success, including occasional limitations to USFS staff availability, unpredictable and limiting weather and wildfire conditions, restrictive periods of operation, etc. Applicants should identify and understand potential factors and dependencies, and prepare to adapt as needed to ensure project success.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact NFWF Program Manager Jorge Nunez at [Jorge.Nunez@nfwf.org](mailto:Jorge.Nunez@nfwf.org), prior to submitting their proposal to discuss ideas, seek relevant project-related information and contacts, and ensure applicability of project proposals with Program objectives and needs of NFWF and the USFS.

## **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](https://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:

*Program Director, Chris Morrill, [Chris.Morrill@nfwf.org](mailto:Chris.Morrill@nfwf.org)*

*Program Manager, Jorge Nunez, [Jorge.Nunez@nfwf.org](mailto:Jorge.Nunez@nfwf.org)*

*Program Coordinator, Alexander Bobeczko, [Alexander.Bobeczko@nfwf.org](mailto:Alexander.Bobeczko@nfwf.org)*

*Regional Director, Jonathan Birdsong, [Jonathan.Birdsong@nfwf.org](mailto:Jonathan.Birdsong@nfwf.org)*

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

Easygrants Helpdesk

Email: [Easygrants@nfwf.org](mailto: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.