KLAMATH BASIN FORESTS AND WATERSHEDS RESTORATION

2026 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 NFWF website for the most current dates and information: Klamath Basin Restoration Program.

Applicant Webinar (Register here)	January 20, 2026, 11:00 AM PST/2:00 PM EST
Full Proposal Due Date	**February 17, 2026, by 8:59 PM PST/11:59 PM EST**
Review Period	February - May 2026
Awards Announced	June 2026

OVERVIEW

The Klamath River Basin is an ecosystem of national and regional significance. From its headwaters just south of Crater Lake in Oregon, the Klamath River flows through a complex of National Wildlife Refuges, six National Forests, and ultimately into the Pacific Ocean, covering an area of more than 12,000 square miles – approximately the size of the State of Maryland. River, riparian, lake, and wetland habitats in the Upper Klamath Basin historically supported healthy populations of culturally and economically important fish such as Lost River and shortnose suckers. Additionally, the Klamath River was once the third-most prolific salmon run in the lower 48 states. Anadromous species of the Klamath River Basin include fall- and spring-run Chinook salmon, coho salmon, Pacific lamprey, green sturgeon, and steelhead trout. The anadromous fish of the Klamath not only have inestimable value to Tribes in the Klamath Basin, but these fish are also a major economic engine for northern California and much of the Oregon coast ocean salmon fisheries.[1]

[1] "Klamath River Basin." *NOAA Fisheries*, 25 Apr. 2022, https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/habitat-conservation/klamath-river-basin.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) has been active in voluntary habitat restoration activities throughout the Klamath River Basin for over 30 years, awarding federal, state, and private funds to help voluntarily stabilize and increase the populations of native suckers in the Upper Klamath Basin and improve anadromous fish habitat. NFWF seeks to build on recent gains in salmon recovery in the Klamath headwaters as well as longstanding efforts to bolster native sucker populations in Upper Klamath Lake, and seeks to support conservation across the Basin. NFWF in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is pleased to announce the **Klamath Basin Forests and Watersheds Restoration Request for Proposals (RFP)**.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

This RFP includes NRCS funding from the Shasta Valley Regional Conservation Partnership Program (Shasta Valley Program) and for Upper Klamath Watershed Resilience. In 2026, NFWF anticipates awarding 4 - 8 projects to support fish and wildlife conservation, restoration, and monitoring projects across the Klamath Basin. Matching funds or partner contribution are required and will be a factor in proposal evaluation. All proposed projects should be completed by June 30, 2028.

Shasta Valley Program
Anticipated number of awards: 2 - 4
Anticipated award range: $500,000 - $2,000,000
Contribution: Required – project should provide **100% contribution** (for every dollar in program funding, one dollar is required in contribution funding). Contributions may be non-federal or federal, however contribution may not come from USDA agencies.

Upper Klamath Watershed Resilience
Anticipated number of awards: 2 - 4
Anticipated award range: $100,000 - $500,000
Match: Required – project should provide **at least 25% match** (for every dollar in grant funding, 25 cents are required in match funding). Match must be non-federal.

Proposals requesting funds in excess of the anticipated award ranges may be considered, however your proposal should include clear justification, and those applicants are encouraged to discuss their proposal with the NFWF Program Manager prior to submittal.

For the Shasta Valley Program, contribution must be expended within the geographic boundary of the RCPP project and be completed between the date of the announcement of proposal selections and prior to October 23, 2028. Contributions must satisfy all RCPP programmatic requirements, including the following:

1) Address RCPP project resource concerns
2) Directly or indirectly benefit eligible agricultural producers and eligible lands

3) Tie to approved project management costs incurred between the announcement of project selections and project award, or broader costs occurring during the life of the partnership agreement governing the Shasta Valley Program
4) Be included in an approved project agreement
5) Be satisfactorily documented and reported by the funding recipient

For Upper Klamath Watershed Resilience funding, 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 for specific information about using indirect costs as match.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Proposed projects must be located within the target geographic area of the Klamath Basin that is relevant to the funding for which they are applying.

Figure 1. Target geographies for both funding opportunities within the Klamath River Basin

For the Shasta Valley Program: Projects must be located within the Shasta River watershed including Big Springs Creek, Parks Creek, or other tributaries.

Figure 2. Target geography for Shasta Valley Program funding

For Upper Klamath Watershed Resilience: Projects must be located within the Klamath Basin in Oregon, from key tributary rivers to Upper Klamath Lake and its surrounding agricultural lands.

Figure 3. Target geography for Upper Klamath Watershed Resilience funding

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Priorities and guidelines for each funding partnership supported by this RFP are outlined below. Applicants are strongly encouraged to reference NFWF's California Forests and Watersheds Business Plan for opportunities to enhance project competitiveness by linking Business Plan strategies and work in focal areas for priority species whenever possible. The digital map for the California Business Plan can be found here. Additionally, projects that incorporate baseline monitoring and take steps to measure and account for habitat and species impact, as well as projects that take a watershed approach and are collaborative in scope with multiple supportive stakeholders will be prioritized.

Shasta Valley Program:

The Shasta Valley Program is supported by a Regional Conservation Partnership Program Alternative Funding Arrangement with NRCS and will fund voluntary activities that advance recovery of Southern Oregon Northern California Coast (SONCC) coho salmon in the Shasta River watershed. Program funds will be used to support voluntary actions that improve upstream management, conveyance efficiency, and on-farm water management to enhance instream flows,

improve water quality, and address inadequate habitat for fish. Successful project proposals will address the resources concerns that are the focus of the Shasta Valley Program: (1) inadequate habitat for fish, wildlife, and invertebrates and (2) excess or insufficient water, drought, and water quality degradation. Due to federal environmental compliance considerations, proposed project work must **not** be included within the Shasta River Safe Harbor Agreement project list.

Proposed projects must include an implementation component. All funded water conservation projects under this program must be paired with formal measures to protect instream flows such as a state-approved instream flow dedication or signed forbearance agreement. Additionally, please note that funding through the Shasta Valley Program is subject to Farm Bill policy regarding indirect costs, technical assistance funds, and financial assistance funds. Applicants must identify the NRCS Conservation Practice(s) and Scenario(s) to be supported by their proposed project and confirm that their project costs will align with NRCS reimbursement rates. Please contact the NFWF Program Manager with questions about NRCS Conservation Practices and reimbursement rates to be directed to relevant guidance. Project types that will be given the highest priority for Shasta Valley Program funding include:

Upstream water conservation and water quality improvement projects:
These projects are necessary to provide adequate habitat for native fish at every life stage. Proposals should demonstrate how the project will conserve water and improve water quality through existing monitoring data or propose to gather data necessary to demonstrate benefits. Projects to conserve upstream water and improve water quality include:

- Source switch projects (e.g., using reservoir water and leaving cold spring water instream)
- Riparian fencing and planting
- Effectiveness monitoring projects

Conveyance and transmission efficiency projects:
These projects are necessary to improve instream flows and water quality by leaving more water instream for longer periods and/or reducing diversion volume. Projects should demonstrate water savings anticipated by providing ditch loss test results or propose to gather needed data and define how and when ditch loss will be left instream. Projects to improve conveyance and transmission efficiency include:

- Modifying, replacing, and moving diversion structures
- Combining, splitting, or rotating diversions
- Improving or replacing piping
- Canal and ditch lining

On-farm water conservation projects:
These projects are necessary to improve instream flows and water quality throughout the Basin by reducing diversion volume, which will be particularly important during drought periods. On-farm water conservation project proposals should consider a productive grounds analysis, provide qualified information on baseline water use, integrate soil moisture sensing, demonstrate water quality benefits, or define the volume of water conserved. On-farm water conservation projects include:

- Conversion of irrigation type to reduce volume of water diverted (e.g., wildland flood irrigation to buried mainlines or sprinklers)
- Installation of soil moisture monitoring systems
- Transition to alternative stock watering systems

All applicants to the Shasta Valley Program must contact NFWF Program Manager Erica Engstrom-Schau (erica.engstrom-schau@nfwf.org, 415-490-5211) prior to proposal submission to discuss their project and review required supplemental budget and technical materials.

Upper Klamath Watershed Resilience:

Upper Klamath Watershed Resilience funding from NRCS will offer grants to organizations or private landowners within the Upper Klamath Basin in Oregon. Program funds will be used to provide outreach and technical assistance to private landowners to develop conservation plans that restore and protect instream and off-channel habitat, restore cold-water springs and refugia habitat, improve aquatic organism passage, improve water quality, enhance instream habitat in flow-limited watersheds, restore the form and function of wetland ecosystems, or improve forest management to benefit watershed resilience and native fish conservation. This funding is intended to increase the delivery and implementation of Farm Bill programs and practices including, but not limited to, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program, Conservation Reserve Program, Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, and Working Lands for Wildlife priorities. Details for each of these programs can be found by clicking the links above.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grant projects, the 2026 Klamath Basin Forests and Watersheds Restoration RFP has a list of metrics in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from the list for their project. All possible program metrics are shown in the table below. If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Erica Engstrom-Schau (erica.engstrom-schau@nfwf.org, 415-490-5211) to discuss acceptable alternatives. Please note that applicants to the **Shasta Valley Program** must include the first metric below (Acre feet of water conserved) in their proposal.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Habitat Management – Improved irrigation practices	Acre feet of water conserved	Enter the # of acre feet of water expected to be conserved annually.

Habitat Restoration – Fish passage improvements	# Passage barriers assessed and/or with design plans	Enter the # of instream barriers with assessments or engineering/design plans completed in this grant. In the NOTES, provide the barrier's SARP ID (see aquaticbarriers.org). If the barrier(s) is not in SARP, provide its latitude/longitude or its name and source.
Habitat Restoration – Fish passage improvements	# Passage barriers rectified	Enter the # of instream barriers removed/rectified in this grant. In the NOTES, provide the barrier's SARP ID (see aquaticbarriers.org). If the barrier(s) is not in SARP, provide its latitude/longitude or its name and source.
Habitat Restoration – 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 the Passage Assessment Database (PAD) (see https://www.calfish.org/ProgramsData/HabitatandBarriers/CaliforniaFishPassageAssessmentDatabase.aspx). This estimate should include both the mainstem of the stream or river and smaller tributaries. If another data source or methodology is used, please describe it in the NOTES.
Habitat Restoration – Floodplain restoration	Acres restored	Enter # of floodplain acres restored. In the NOTES, indicate % of vegetation on the pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%) and the dominant vegetation being restored (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, shrub, grass, marsh, wet meadow, swamp).

Habitat Restoration – Instream restoration	# Structures installed	Enter the number of habitat structures installed, replaced, upgraded, or repaired for improvement of instream habitat.
Habitat Restoration – Instream restoration	Miles restored	Enter the number of stream miles enhanced or restored. Include modifications to stream channel (shape, cross-section, or profile) or meander pattern, placement of large woody debris or log jams, etc.
Habitat Restoration – Land restoration	Acres of trees planted	Enter the number of acres of trees planted. In the NOTES, specify landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland), average number of trees per acre planted, and forest type (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, shrub).
Habitat Restoration – Land restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of acres of habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grassland, shrubland) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow, tidal marsh, swamp).
Habitat Restoration – Riparian restoration	Acres restored	Enter the number of riparian acres restored. In the NOTES, 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.

Habitat Restoration – Wetland restoration	Acres restored	Wetlands in this context refer to off and side channel habitat and ponds created to provide refugia for coho. Enter # acres of WETLAND (not riparian or instream) habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (marsh, tidal marsh, wet meadow, swamp) and indicate % of vegetation on pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%).
Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Outreach/ Technical Assistance	# People reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities	Enter the number of people reached by outreach, training, or technical assistance activities.
Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Outreach/ Technical Assistance	# People with changed behavior	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 farmers receiving gov't agency cost share or financial assistance" metric.
Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Economic benefits	# 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 for this metric should be zero and target value should be a whole number. In the NOTES section, provide the FTE for the jobs created.
Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Economic benefits	# Jobs sustained	Enter the # of paid jobs that are partially or fully sustained through this grant. The starting value for this metric should be zero and target value should be a whole number. Jobs should have existed prior to the grant, be funded by the grant, and be directly engaged in project activities.

Capacity, Outreach, Incentives – Incentives	# Participants receiving government agency cost share or financial assistance	Enter the number of participants enrolled in government cost share or financial assistance programs. 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.
Planning, Research, Monitoring – BMP development	# Management plans into which BMPs were incorporated	Enter the number of completed management plans into which Best Management Practices (BMPs) were incorporated.
Planning, Research, Monitoring – BMP development	# 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.
Planning, Research, Monitoring – Restoration planning/ design/ permitting	# Engineering and design plans developed	Enter the number of Engineering and Design plans, and/or compliance documents developed. Generally, there will be one plan per milestone (e.g., 10% design, 30% design, sampling design plan, final report/data compilation).
Planning, Research, Monitoring – Research	# Studies completed whose findings are used to adapt management/inform management decisions	Enter the number of studies and reports with findings that will be produced to adapt and inform management decisions.
Planning, Research, Monitoring – Research	Acres assessed for improved management	Enter the number of acres assessed.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include: non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal governments and organizations, special districts (e.g., conservation districts, planning districts, utility districts), and educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include: international organizations, businesses, unincorporated individuals, or U.S. Federal government agencies.

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 • 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

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. Applicants to the Shasta Valley Program will be asked to complete a separate budget template as part of their full proposal. For Shasta Valley Program projects, indirect costs are **not** allowable.

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.

Cost-Effectiveness – Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the most economically 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

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 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. No advances of funds will be allowed.

Compliance Requirements – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act (ESA) (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). 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). Applicants should budget 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.

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your application 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 on your application. This document can be downloaded here.

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website's Application Information page.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

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For issues or assistance with NFWF's online Easygrants system, please contact:
Easygrants Helpdesk
Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail: 202-595-2497
Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm EST, Monday - Friday.
Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.