



Southeast Aquatics Fund

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PARTNERS

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Southern Company
- The Altria Group

ABOUT NFWF

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) works with partners to foster sustainable and impactful conservation solutions so that people and nature thrive together. Chartered by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. Since its founding, NFWF has funded more than 23,300 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of more than \$11.3 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org



Speckled darter

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service with funding from the RESTORE Council, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Southern Company and the Altria Group announced a ninth round of funding for Southeast Aquatics Fund projects. Eight new watershed-based habitat restoration projects and one amendment totaling \$3.1 million were awarded that will benefit freshwater species. The eight awards announced leveraged \$1.9 million in matching funds from grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$5 million.

The Southeast Aquatics Fund is a competitive grants program that supports watershed-based restoration to improve the health of southeastern aquatic systems and secure populations of native freshwater aquatic species. Utilizing a habitat-based approach means a diversity of species benefit, from game species such as northern bobwhite quail to at-risk species like the trispot darter and Alabama rainbow mussel.

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Bridled darters

ALABAMA

Reducing Sediment to Benefit Fish in the Middle Coosa and Locust Fork Watersheds (AL)

Grantee: The Nature Conservancy

Grant Amount:\$300,000

Matching Funds:\$216,900

Total Project Amount:\$516,900

Stabilize streambanks in a priority stretch of Big Canoe Creek to reduce sedimentation. Project will stabilize and restore 700 linear feet of eroding streambank which will serve as a demonstration site to further engage private landowners in aquatic conservation, benefiting the trispot darter, Coosa creekshell and other imperiled aquatic species.

FLORIDA

Restoring Swamp Forest Ecosystems to Improve Water Quality in the Apalachicola River Floodplain (FL)

Grantee: Louisiana State University Agricultural Center

Grant Amount:\$225,000

Matching Funds:\$211,700

Total Project Amount:\$436,700

Hydrologically restore floodplain forest through thinning to remove competing drier-site tree species and plant swamp tree seedlings. Project will implement improved forest management practices that will result in habitat enhancement, greater

nutrient and detritus contributions from swamp tree leaf litter and improved water quality for aquatic species.

GEORGIA

Improving Water Quantity and Quality in the Flint River (GA)

Grantee: Flint Riverkeeper

Grant Amount:\$782,000

Matching Funds:\$159,000

Total Project Amount:\$941,000

Improve water quality and quantity in the Flint River through engagement with agricultural producers to benefit aquatic species. Project will engage 185 landowners in cost-share programs, resulting in increased adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and irrigation efficiencies.

MISSISSIPPI

Improving Aquatic Connectivity and Fish Passage (MS)

Grantee: Sustainable Forestry Initiative

Grant Amount:\$200,000

Matching Funds:\$555,600

Total Project Amount:\$755,600

Restore and enhance assessment targeted instream habitat. Project will remove seven barriers to fish passage, open 15 miles of stream and monitor 607 sites using eDNA techniques to measure biodiversity improvements.

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Coosa crayfish

Restoring Aquatic Connectivity and Shoreline Stability Along Old Fort Bayou (MS)

Grantee: Mississippi State University

Grant Amount:\$497,000

Matching Funds:\$251,900

Total Project Amount:\$748,900

Implement streambank stabilization and upgrade two low-water crossings on private forest lands through nature-based infrastructure such as native plantings and improved road designs. Project will engage private landowners and reduce erosion, improve water quality, and reconnect riparian corridors and monitor vegetative cover (NDVI), sediment, and nutrient levels to assess success and inform adaptive management.

MULTIPLE STATES

Improving Water Quality through Engaging Private Landowners in Voluntary Conservation Practices (AL, FL, GA)

Grantee: American Farmland Trust

Grant Amount:\$437,100

Matching Funds:\$155,000

Total Project Amount:\$592,100

Improve water quality and aquatic habitat for freshwater species through implementing voluntary conservation practices on private lands. Project will provide technical assistance to private landowners to install 10 miles of fencing around streams and riparian areas and implement voluntary managed grazing practices, such as rotational grazing, on 1,550 acres of farmland.

Stocking and Monitoring of Native Mussels and Fishes in the Conasauga River (GA, TN)

Grantee: University of Georgia Research Foundation

Grant Amount:\$369,900

Matching Funds:\$271,800

Total Project Amount:\$641,700

Stock and monitor native mussels and implement a comprehensive monitoring strategy for endemic native fishes

in the Conasauga River. Project will restock Alabama rainbow mussels at two sites that were previously restored and monitor endemic fishes to inform future restoration efforts.

Improving Riparian Habitat through Technical Assistance and Outreach for the Conasauga River (GA, TN)

Grantee: Limestone Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council

Grant Amount:\$209,600

Matching Funds:\$169,400

Total Project Amount:\$379,000

Improve riparian habitat in the Conasauga River watershed through landowner outreach and technical assistance and enrolling private landowners in voluntary Farm Bill programs. Project will develop 26 management plans, implement conservation tillage practices on 500 acres and place an additional 200 acres under improved management practices to benefit aquatic species such as the blue shiner, trispot darter and bridled darter.

AMENDMENT

Protecting Critical Habitat and Water Quality through Grazing Management Plans (FL)

Grantee: The Trust for Tomorrow

Grant Amount:\$147,600

Matching Funds:\$0

Total Project Amount:\$147,600

Project amendment to provide technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to provide grazing management plans and implement conservation practices that will improve water quality and quantity, while protecting critical habitats and creating carbon benefits. Project will result in 55,000 acres under grazing management throughout Florida; development of 240 grazing management plans; outreach, education, and technical assistance to 240 private landowners; and implementation of conservation actions by 240 landowners.