

Southeast Aquatics Fund 2026 Applicant Webinar



Photo by USFWS



WEBINAR INSTRUCTIONS

- We may ask you to raise your “hand” in the webinar to confirm participants can hear us.
- To improve sound quality, all participants will be muted for the duration of the webinar. If you want to ask a question you have two options:
 1. Enter your query where it says “Chat” and click send. We will type a response or read your question aloud when we pause for Q&A.
 2. Write it down and contact us after the webinar. We have a lot of material to cover, so you may prefer to have a more in-depth discussion later.
- If you experience a technical glitch, please type it into the chat, since we can’t hear you. (We may not know about the glitch unless you say something!)

The webinar will be available for download within 48 hours at <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/southeast-aquatics>

YOUR NFWF CONTACTS



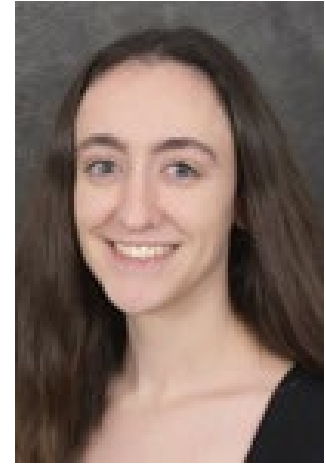
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AGENDA

- 2026 Southeast Aquatics Fund RFP Overview
 - Program Overview
 - Geographic Scope of the RFP
 - Actions Funded Under the RFP
 - Important Considerations
 - Timeline
- How to Apply in Easygrants
- Question and Answer



Southeast Aquatics Fund

The Southeast Aquatics Fund invests in watershed-based restoration and management to improve the health of aquatic systems, secure populations of native freshwater aquatic species, and conserve biodiversity.

Public-Private Partnership



Altria



Southern
Company



Greenbreast darter



Rainbow shiners



NFWF

Longleaf Forests and Rivers Business Plan



NFWF

Longleaf Forests and Rivers

10-Year Activity Goals

Goal	Target
Adoption of voluntary agricultural practices	10,000 acres with BMPs
Enhance aquatic connectivity in the Conasauga and restore access to spawning in the Middle Coosa watershed	15 stream miles opened 10 passage barriers rectified
Streambank stabilization to enhance aquatic habitats	5 miles of stream restored 3,000,000 lbs of sediment prevented from entering the system annually
Captive rearing of Villosa mussels to restock at Holly Creek (tributary of Conasauga River)	2 sites restocked 1,500 individuals restocked
Build capacity and conduct outreach to educate and increase awareness of conservation needs	500 people reached

2026 Funding Opportunity

- **Request for proposals:**
www.nfwf.org/programs/southeast-aquatics
- **Proposal due date:** July 1, 2026, by 11:59PM ET
- **Typical grant award size:** \$150,000 - \$500,000
 - Applicants considering proposals outside of this funding range are encouraged to contact NFWF prior to submitting.
- **Grant Period:** 24 – 36 months
- **Matching contributions requirement:** Minimum 1:1
 - Applicants unable to provide this level of match are eligible to apply but should reach out to NFWF staff to discuss during proposal development
- **Eligible applicants**
 - Non-profit 501(c) organizations
 - State, tribal, and local governments
 - Educational institutions



2026 RFP Program Activities

1. Water Conservation and Aquifer Recharge in Texas
2. Forest Management for Improved Gulf Water Quality
3. Aquatic, Riparian, and Forest Restoration and Recovery
4. Restore and Enhance Instream and Riparian Habitat
5. Assessment, Prioritization and Planning for Watershed Resilience and Aquatic Connectivity
6. Private Landowner Technical Assistance and Project Implementation
7. Accelerating Species Recovery and Response Monitoring

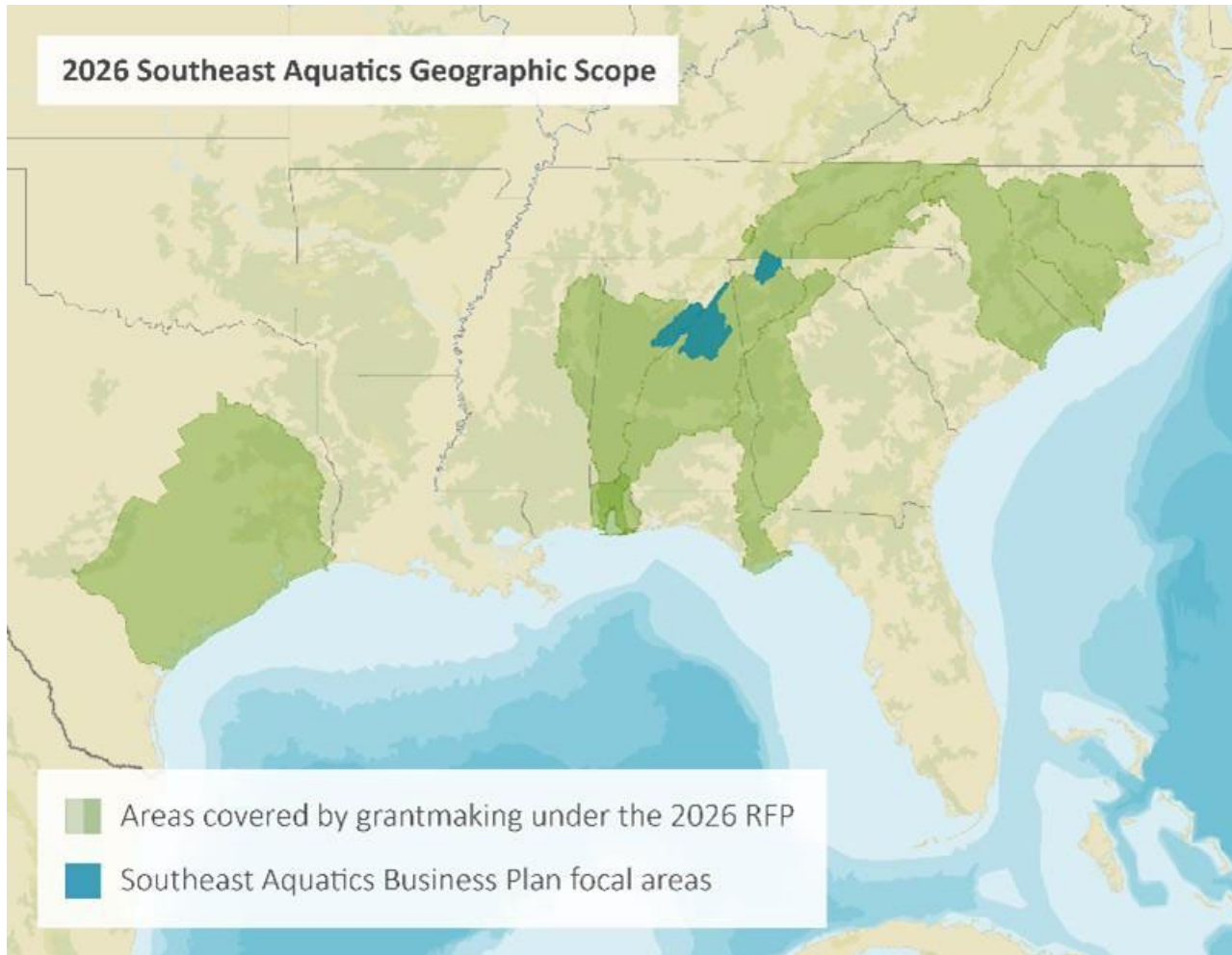


Greenhead shiners



NFWF

2026 Geographic Scope



Proposals will be considered from six geographies:

1. Conasauga River Watershed (GA/TN)
2. Middle Coosa and Locust Fork Watersheds (AL)
3. Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River Basin (AL/FL/GA)
4. Large River Basins in Alabama and the Carolinas
5. East Texas
6. Alabama Coastal Zone-Baldwin and Mobile Counties
7. Southern Appalachia (NC, TN, SC)



Water Conservation and Aquifer Recharge in East Texas

- Help offset water use from surface sources and the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer.
- Activities can include forest management, invasive species control, native tree planting, and water retention/detention measures in order to slow water movement
- We encourage reaching out to NFWF staff to discuss your project if considering a proposal under this activity



Forest Management for Improved Gulf Water Quality

- Improve water quality through improved forest management in Alabama- Baldwin and Mobile Counties
- Innovation in incentivizing water quality improvements through forest management by private forest owners.
- Measuring water quality benefits in the Gulf Coast region that can lead to a focus on priority areas.
- We encourage reaching out to NFWF staff to discuss your project if considering a proposal under this activity



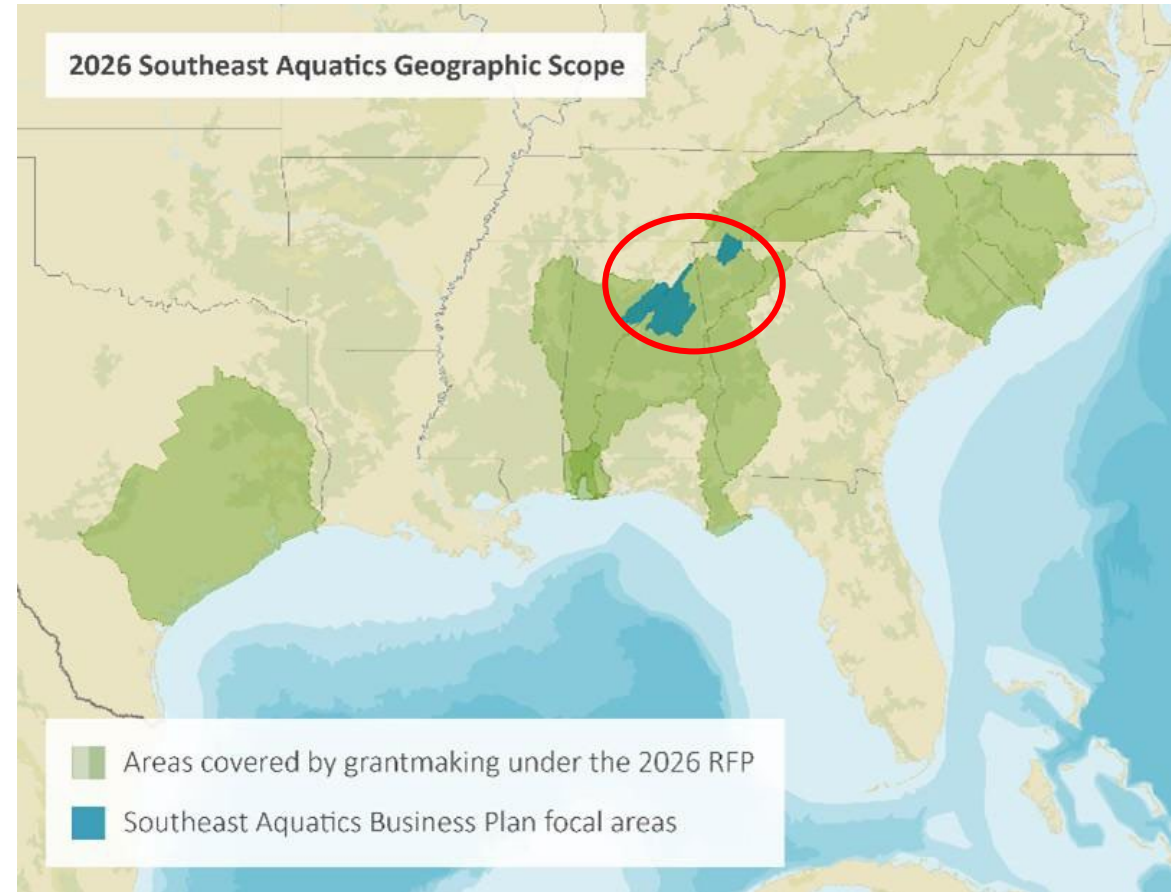
Aquatic, Riparian, and Forest Restoration and Recovery

- Aquatic and forest restoration in areas impacted by storms, in particular Hurricane Helene, to provide suitable habitat
- Aquatic
 - Streambank and riparian bioengineering
 - Restoration
- Forest
 - Removal of hazardous fuels
 - Invasive species control
 - Promotion of forest regeneration



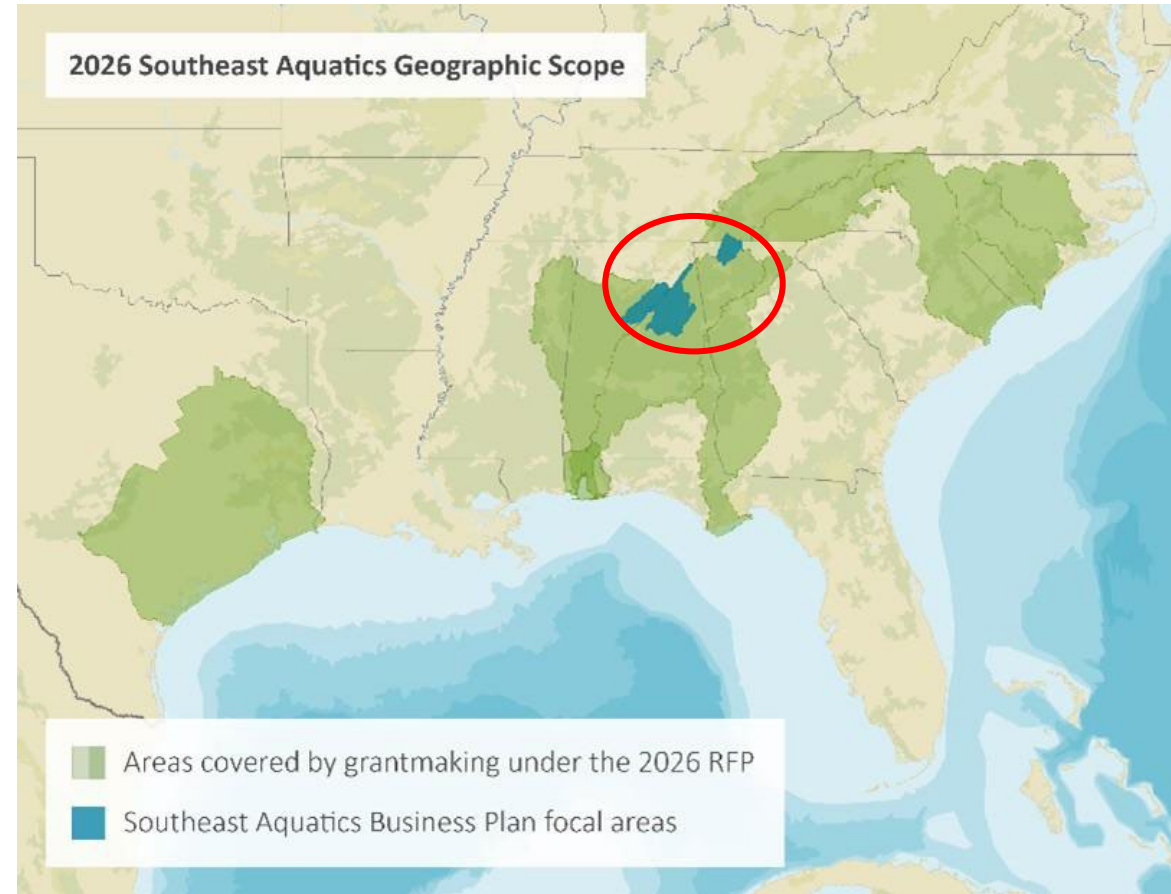
Restore and Enhance Instream and Riparian Habitat

- Improve aquatic habitat quality through restoration of in-stream or riparian habitat
 - Stream bank restoration
 - Riparian habitat restoration
 - Removal of barriers to aquatic organism passage
 - Other improvements to in-stream habitat
- Focused mostly within Conasauga, Middle Coosa, and Locust Fork watersheds, although may be considered in other geographies



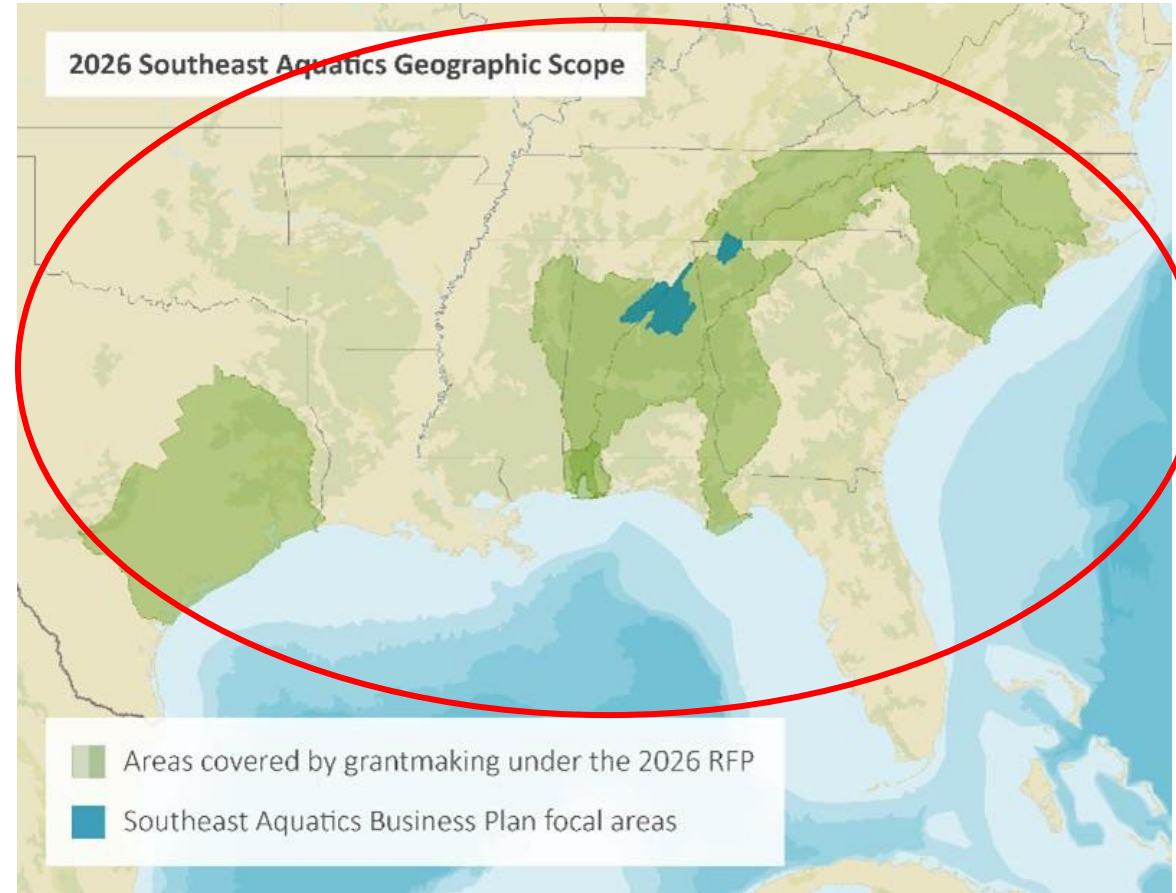
Assessment, Prioritization and Planning for Watershed Resilience and Aquatic Connectivity

- Assess barriers to aquatic organism passage
- Prioritize barriers for removal, especially in relation to focal species
- Particular focus on assessments that consider long term resilience of focal species
- Primarily focused within Conasauga, Middle Coosa, and Locust Fork watersheds, although may be considered in other geographies



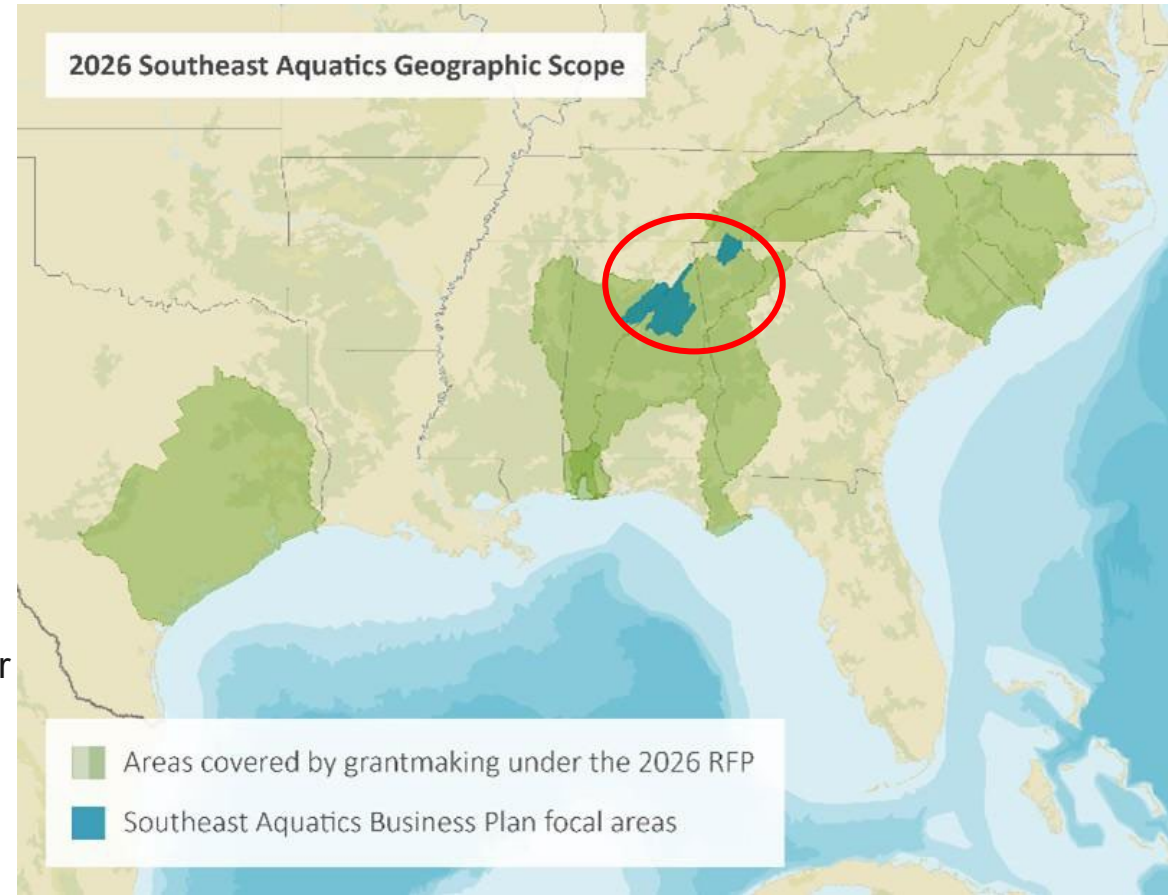
Private Landowner Technical Assistance & Project Implementation

- Support capacity to deliver technical assistance to private landowners
 - Help landowners develop management plans and design and implement conservation practices
 - Assist with enrollment in Farm Bill programs and assist with practice implementation through these programs
- Increase adoption of voluntary agricultural and forestry practices that benefit aquatic conservation
- Project are encouraged, where applicable, to demonstrate support of NRCS's Working Lands for Wildlife initiatives, including state aquatic initiatives
- If assisting with Farm Bill program signup and practice implementation, applicants should coordinate with state NRCS office while developing project
- All geographies eligible, emphasis in SC



Accelerating Species Recovery and Response Monitoring

- Villosa mussel conservation
 - Focus on two species- Alabama rainbow (*Villosa nebulosa*/Cambarunio nebulosus) and Coosa creekshell (*Villosa umbrans*)
 - Propagation and stocking of mussels
- Focal species monitoring
 - Monitor population status and habitat condition for focal endemic native fish species in Conasauga and Middle Coosa
 - Alabama shiner, banded sculpin, blue shiner, bridled darter, Coosa darter, Coosa shiner, Greenbreast darter, tricolor shiner and trispot darter
 - Monitor population status and habitat condition for *Villosa* mussels in Conasauga
 - May also consider monitoring for Black Warrior waterdog and flattened musk turtle in Locust fork
- Encourage this to be paired with habitat restoration activities



Important Considerations

- Single Audit and Form 990 should be up to date. Complete the 2025 audit by the end of September 2026.
- The grantee is responsible for the compliance of subgrantees.
- Revised Uniform Guidance may or may not be applicable.
- If you feel that you will have trouble meeting match requirements, call us.
- Provide realistic metrics- consult metrics table appendix in the RFP.
- Consult with NRCS if applicable.



Program Timeline



Spatial Data

- Why is NFWF requiring spatial data?
 - Track progress toward habitat restoration goals and demonstrate impact on the landscape
 - To perform spatial analyses (ex. assess habitat change over time) and depict the generalized project location on maps
- What is required:
 - Polygons depicting the location and boundary of each project activity supported with grant funding and matching funds within the project period of performance (ex. prescribed burn footprints)*
 - Attribute field that includes the activity associated with each polygon (ex. burning)
- What is **not** required:
 - Landowner identifying information
- Projects where the exact location of project activities are unknown at the proposal stage may submit approximate project boundaries but must submit accurate spatial data depicting project activity boundaries with the final report.

How to Apply in Easygrants



Brook trout



NFWF

Signing in to Easygrants

[? Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Log In

[New User?](#)

Login ID / Email

Password

Remember Me [Forgot Password?](#)

Log In

For the optimal Easygrants experience, please:

- [Use a Supported Browser](#)
- [Enable Pop-ups](#)
- [Allow Cookies](#)
- [Only Use One Tab](#)
- [Get Adobe Reader](#)
- [Log Out and Close Browser for Security](#)

Register

First Name *

Middle Name

Last Name *

Login ID / Email *

Confirm Login ID / Email *

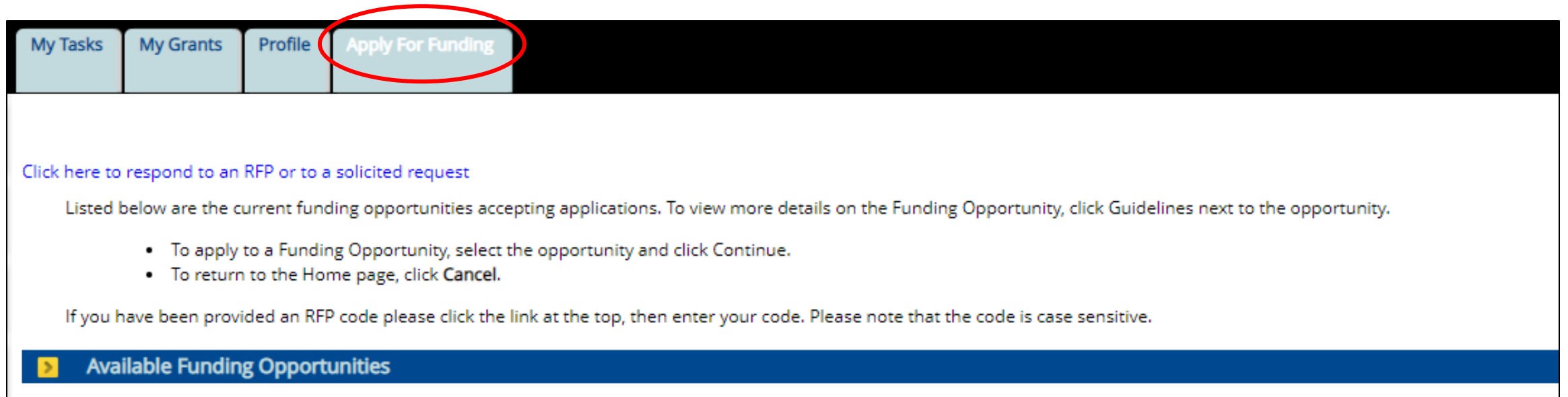
Password *

[Password Requirements](#)

Confirm Password *

Register **Back**

Applying in Easygrants




My Tasks My Grants Profile **Apply For Funding**

[Click here to respond to an RFP or to a solicited request](#)

Listed below are the current funding opportunities accepting applications. To view more details on the Funding Opportunity, click Guidelines next to the opportunity.

- To apply to a Funding Opportunity, select the opportunity and click Continue.
- To return to the Home page, click Cancel.

If you have been provided an RFP code please click the link at the top, then enter your code. Please note that the code is case sensitive.

 Available Funding Opportunities

Once you are on your Easygrants homepage, click on “Apply for Funding”

Choose the Funding Opportunity you’re applying to.



Proposal Main Page

Home

Main

Contact Information

Organization Information

Project Information

Project Location

Map

Uploads

Metrics

Budget

Matching Contributions

Permits and Approvals

Review and Submit

Project Information

Due: **12/16/2021 11:59 PM ET** Easygrants ID: 74112
Bernstein, Zack |
Grants | Lower MS Alluvial Valley Fund | Lower MS Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund 2022

Instructions

Click the page links on the left navigation bar, or in the summary below to view the pages where you will enter the information required for this submission. **Click** as needed until you submit. Once you submit, you will no longer be able to make changes. [Click here to view Foundation Guidelines for this Funding Opportunity.](#)
Other useful links that will appear in the navigation bar at left include:

- **Home** brings you back to your Home page and out of this submission task.
- **FAQ** provides answers to common questions about the Foundation's proposal elements.
- **Help** provides guidance on both content and technical aspects related to completing many of the pages in the system.
- **Log Out** logs you out of the system.

Validation Summary

Page Name	Status
Contact Information	✓ Complete
Organization Information	✗ Incomplete
Project Information	✗ Incomplete
Project Location	✗ Incomplete
Map	✗ Incomplete
Uploads	✗ Incomplete
Metrics	✗ Incomplete
Budget	✗ Incomplete
Matching Contributions	✓ Complete
Permits and Approvals	✓ Complete

Project Information

Title: Short, descriptive name indicating project purpose. (~100 characters)

Project start and end dates: Start within six months of the award announcement date and end within 24-36 months of the start date.

Description: Two sentences about primary project activities, location, outcome/metrics and relevance to conservation. (~500 characters)

- Clearly state the main activity and the method being used
- Address a specific habitat, location or species benefitted

Abstract: More detailed description including location, major activities, outcome/metrics, and partners. (~1,500 characters)

- State what your organization will do
- Provide context and background information
- Explain how the project outcomes will specifically address a conservation issue

Map



Map your project at the finest scale by any of the three options:

Upload Shapefile

- Select a Zip file(.zip) containing a shapefile(.shp,.dbf,.prj) from your local file system.
- The shapefile must be of POLYGON geometry type.
- The shapefile must not exceed 1 MB.

No file chosen

Select By Geography

Draw a Custom Area

My project area:

Submitted Project Locations

Pending Project Locations



I confirm that this project has been mapped as accurately as possible

Uploads

Upload Checklist		
Upload Type	Required	Template
Full Proposal Narrative (DEI)	Yes	Full Proposal Narrative Template (DEI)
Project Map	No	
Letters of Support	No	
Conceptual Plans	No	
Engineered Plans	No	
Photos - Jpeg	No	
Resumes	No	
Statement of Litigation	Yes	Statement of Litigation
Board of Trustees, Directors, or equivalent	Yes	
Applicant Controls Questionnaire (Pre 5.24.23)	Yes	Applicant Controls Questionnaire (Pre 5.24.23)
Applicant Demographic Information Form	Yes	Applicant Demographic Information Form
GAAP audited financial statements	Yes	
IRS Form 990	Yes	
Single Audit (Formerly A-133 Audit)	Yes	
Indirect Rate Agreement	No	
Other Documents	No	

The full list of required uploads for your organization type is available on the NFWF website here: <https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information/required-financial-documents>

Narrative

- **Activities:** Elaborate on the primary activities that will be employed through the grant. Explain how these activities are expected to lead to the outcome(s). Describe how these activities relate to established plans (management, conservation, recovery, etc.) and priority conservation needs in the specific project location.
- **Outcome(s):** Elaborate on the outcome(s) summarized previously in the application; discuss what makes this outcome(s) achievable and important.
- **Tracking Metrics:** Indicate how the project will monitor/assess progress on the metrics selected previously in the application. Please note any challenges or limitations anticipated with tracking the metrics.
- **Project Team:** List key individuals and describe their qualifications relevant for project implementation.
- **Other (Optional):** Provide any further information important for the review of this proposal.



Metrics

Select Metric [X]

Show: Search:

<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - BMP development - # mgmt plans with BMPs	?	Planning, Research, Monitoring	Recommended
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - Incentives - \$ value of gov agency cost share or financial assistance	?	C	In
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - Fish passage improvements - # passage barriers rectified	?	H	
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - Incentives - # participants receiving gov agency cost share or financial assistance	?		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - Improved management practices - Acres with managed grazing	?	Habitat Management	Recommended
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - Fish passage improvements - Miles of stream opened	?	Habitat Restoration	Recommended
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - Riparian restoration - Miles restored	?	Habitat Restoration	Recommended
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - BMP implementation for fencing improvements - Miles of fencing improved or installed	?	Habitat Management	Recommended
<input type="checkbox"/>	SEAquatics - BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - Acres with enhanced nutrient mgt	?	Habitat Management	Recommended

Metric instruction: Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice.

*** If none of the available metrics apply to your project, please contact NFWF to discuss**



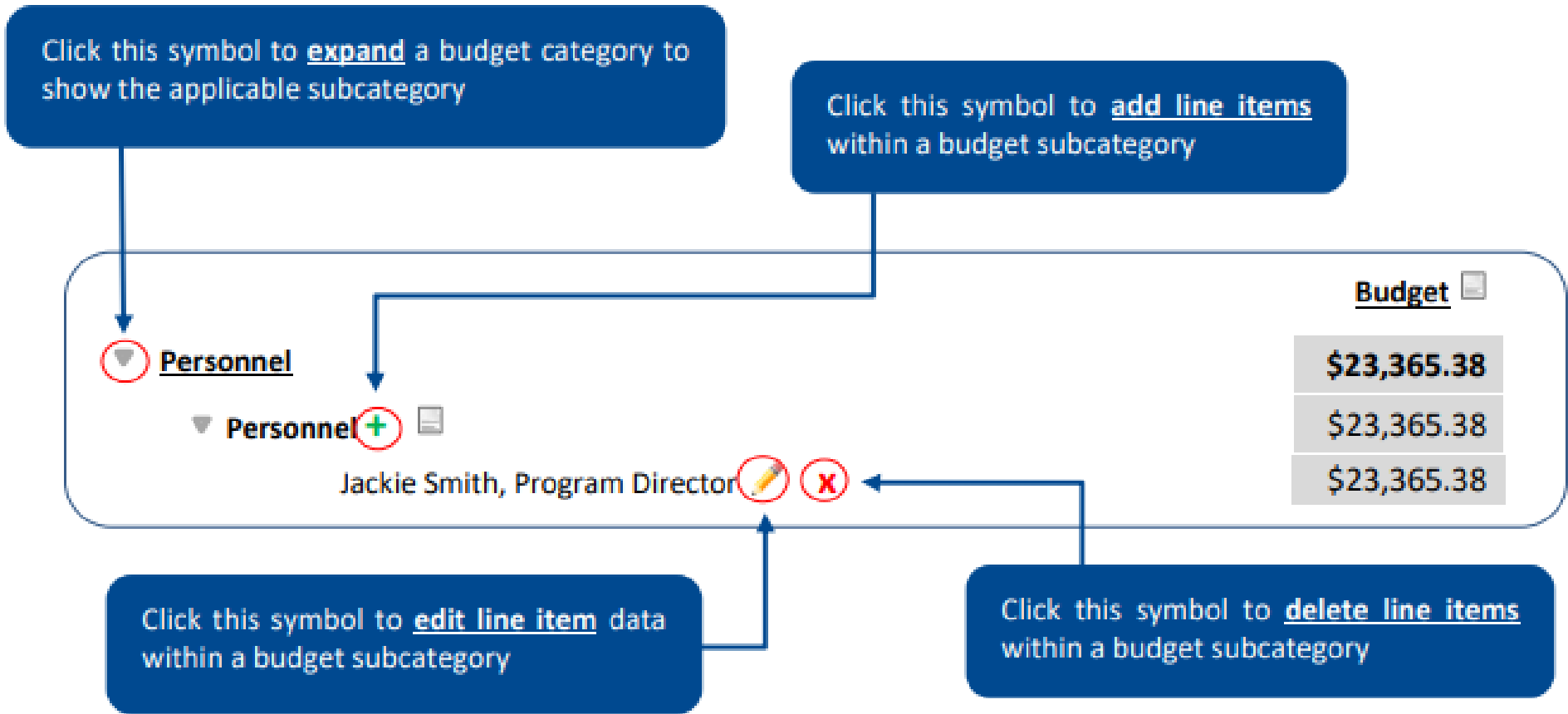
Budget

- In order to complete a budget for your proposal, you must expand the appropriate categories and provide the information requested.
- If you do not anticipate an expense for a particular category, skip that category- it is not necessary to enter a “0” value in the cost fields.
- Try to anticipate factors that may affect the budget when developing projections and provide an explanation of those factors.
- Matching contributions should not be included in the budget.

The screenshot shows a web interface for budgeting. At the top, there is a blue header with a right-pointing chevron and the word "Budget". Below this is a blue button labeled "Expand all". The main content area contains a list of budget categories, each with a right-pointing chevron and an underlined label. To the right of the list is a column of budget values, each in a grey box. The categories and their values are: Personnel (\$0.00), Travel (\$0.00), Equipment (\$0.00), Materials and Supplies (\$0.00), Contractual Services (\$0.00), Other Direct Costs (\$0.00), Total Direct Costs (\$0.00), Total Indirect Costs (\$0.00), and Total Costs (\$0.00). The word "Budget" is also written in the top right corner of the table area.

	Budget
> <u>Personnel</u>	\$0.00
> <u>Travel</u>	\$0.00
> <u>Equipment</u>	\$0.00
> <u>Materials and Supplies</u>	\$0.00
> <u>Contractual Services</u>	\$0.00
> <u>Other Direct Costs</u>	\$0.00
<u>Total Direct Costs</u>	\$0.00
<u>Total Indirect Costs</u>	\$0.00
<u>Total Costs</u>	\$0.00

Navigating the Budget



Adding/Editing Budget Narratives

- Narratives are required for all budgeted categories.
 - Explain/justify the estimated costs including the unit cost and quantity requested
 - Explain how the costs associated with each line item supports the implementation of the project as outlined in the proposal
- Narratives should be written in such a way that someone not familiar with the project can conceptually understand the **rationale**, **purpose** and **calculation** of the anticipated costs identified by line item.
- Narratives should be concise and describe line items in 1-3 sentences.

Figures without narrative descriptions will be returned to the applicant for further details and clarification.

Click this symbol to add a narrative within a budget subcategory



	Budget
Personnel	\$23,365.38
Personnel + 	\$23,365.38

Next, complete the narrative box as shown below:

Notes		
Line Item Budget	Personnel	
Budget	Jackie Smith will manage all aspects of the program which includes, surveys of the project site alongside field techs, landowner interviews and follow-ups, and supervision of volunteers during sponsored work days.	
Save	Save and Close	Cancel

Matching Contributions

Matching Contribution Editor

Instructions

Enter the required matching contribution details below. Click **Save** regularly to save your work. **The system will timeout and you will lose unsaved work if you do not save at least once every hour.** Click **Save and Close** to save and return to the Matching Contributions list page. Fields marked with a red asterisk (*) are required for final submission for most programs. Click **Help** for examples and instructions.

Status *

Source *
Enter the name of the person or Organization providing the Matching Contribution

Source Type *

Type *

Description *
Limit: 250 characters Remaining: 250

Amount *

Save and Close **Close**

Review and Submit

- Make sure to click the blue “Submit” button to submit your proposal.
- If correctly submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail and the task will disappear from your homepage.

NOTE: You must enable pop-ups to use this system. If a link does not open please try holding the Shift or Control (CTRL)

Page Name	Status
Contact Information	✓ Complete
Organization Information	✗ Incomplete
Project Information	✗ Incomplete
Project Location	✗ Incomplete
Map	✗ Incomplete
Uploads	✗ Incomplete
Budget	✓ Complete
Matching Contributions	✓ Complete
Permits and Approvals	✓ Complete

Resources

Tip Sheet

https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2026-04/southeast-aquatics-fund-2026-tip-sheet_0.pdf

Required Financial Documents

<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/required-financial-docs.aspx>

Budget Instructions

<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/budget-instructions.aspx>

Detailed Budget and Narrative Guide

<https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2020-07/nfwf-detailed-budget-narrative-guide.pdf>

Longleaf Forests and Rivers Business Plan

<https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/longleaf/Documents/longleaf-forests-rivers-business-plan.pdf>

NFWF Indirect Policy

<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/indirect-policy.aspx>

Mapping Tutorial

<http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/mapping-tool.aspx>



NFWF

QUESTIONS or COMMENTS

To discuss proposal/project ideas:

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(202) 595-2609

Zack Bernstein
Senior Manager, Southern Forests
zachary.bernstein@nfwf.org
(202) 595-2433

For help with navigating Easygrants:

Kat Sanz
Coordinator, Regional Programs
kat.sanz@nfwf.org
(202) 888-1671

For help with Easygrants technical issues:

Email helpdesk at Easygrants@nfwf.org or leave a message at 202-595-2497

