



Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative

NFWF CONTACTS

Kirstin Neff
Program Director,
Southwest
kirstin.neff@nfwf.org
303-222-6485

Emma Wigger
Manager,
Rocky Mountain Regional
Programs
emma.wigger@nfwf.org
202-888-1680

Trevor Davis
Coordinator,
Rocky Mountain Regional
Programs
trevor.davis@nfwf.org
202-595-2442

PARTNERS

- Apache Corporation
- Chevron Corporation
- ConocoPhillips
- Occidental Corporation
- ExxonMobil
- Bureau of Land Management

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 23,900 projects that have generated a total conservation impact of \$12 billion.

Learn more at www.nfwf.org



Rio Grande cooter on the Black River

OVERVIEW

The Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative (PWCi) is dedicated to restoring and sustaining healthy rivers, streams and grasslands that provide important wildlife habitat in the Pecos River watershed of southeastern New Mexico and West Texas. The fund was launched in 2017 to identify significant conservation opportunities that improve habitat, address water scarcity, improve water quality and engage local communities.

Since its inception, the PWCi has invested over \$13.7 million in 62 projects that have collectively leveraged nearly \$26.5 million in grantee-provided matching contributions for a total on-the-ground impact of \$40.2 million. By addressing three priority strategies – habitat restoration and management of riparian and grassland systems, species intervention, and species information – these projects benefit migratory grassland birds like chestnut collared longspur and Sprague's pipit, as well as pronghorn and aquatic or semi-aquatic species such as Pecos pupfish, Pecos gambusia, Texas hornshell, and Rio Grande cooter.

Apache Corporation, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Occidental Corporation, and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced a 2026-year round of funding for PWCi projects. The Initiative awarded nearly \$1.2 million to four new upland habitat and aquatic species conservation grants. The four awards leveraged nearly \$1.5 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of more than \$2.6 million. Implementation partners include soil and water conservation districts, nonprofit organizations, and universities.

(continued)

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Pecos Watershed Conservation Initiative will:

- Improve the management and function of native grasslands, many of which have been negatively impacted by past management and fragmentation
- Increase grassland connectivity to allow for the seasonal movements of resident pronghorn within the species' range that are important for their survival
- Research data gaps for species and their conservation needs
- Strengthen the health of habitat along the Pecos River and its tributaries in West Texas and southern New Mexico, including some of the last remaining populations of fish and other aquatic species found only in the Chihuahuan Desert
- Identify opportunities to re-establish species to areas of their range where they have been lost or bolster small remnant populations

PWCI investments are targeted primarily to tributary watersheds and grasslands within the region where investments in restoration are expected to realize the greatest return for species. The priority conservation strategies for the region were determined by a team of local partners with on-the-ground knowledge of conservation needs and opportunities and are detailed in NFWF's Southwest Rivers Business Plan.

2026 GRANTS

Assessing Habitat Needs to Inform Conservation of the Texas Hornshell Mussel (NM)

Grantee: Center for Environmental Health Monitoring and Management DBA CEHMM

Grant Amount:\$105,400

Matching Funds:\$108,500

Total Project Amount:\$213,900

Collect detailed environmental and habitat data along the Black River, New Mexico, to identify key microhabitat features influencing Texas hornshell mussel persistence. Project will produce the most comprehensive dataset to date on Texas hornshell habitat needs to inform future conservation, restoration, and translocation efforts while supporting ongoing cooperative conservation among landowners, agencies, and industry partners to protect aquatic ecosystem health in the Black River watershed.

Brush and Invasive Management to Restore Grassland and River Habitats in Chaves County, New Mexico

Grantee: Chaves Soil and Water Conservation District

Grant Amount:\$304,000

Matching Funds:\$530,000

Total Project Amount:\$834,000

Restore grasslands and riparian areas along the Pecos River in Chaves County, New Mexico, through removal of woody brush and noxious weeds. Project will mechanically and chemically remove woody brush such as mesquite, which encroaches into wintering bird and grassland obligate species habitat, and saltcedar, which inhibits water infiltration, to improve habitat conditions for species including pronghorn, chestnut-collared longspur, Sprague's pipit and Pecos pupfish.



Pronghorn in New Mexico

Establishing New Populations of Pecos Gambusia at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge (NM)

Grantee: University of Missouri, St. Louis

Grant Amount:\$420,700

Matching Funds:\$420,700

Total Project Amount:\$841,400

Establish at least two new populations of the federally endangered Pecos gambusia in spring and sinkhole habitats at Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge, New Mexico, through science-based translocations supported by ecological monitoring, genetic assessment, and captive breeding. These actions will restore native fish communities, improve habitat quality for co-occurring species such as the Pecos pupfish, and create a model for future desert fish recovery efforts.

Improving Fencing on the Marfa Plateau to Reconnect Pronghorn Habitat (TX)

Grantee: Borderlands Research Institute-Sul Ross State University

Grant Amount:\$327,600

Matching Funds:\$397,100

Total Project Amount:\$724,700

Reconnect pronghorn habitat through fencing modifications on the Marfa Plateau, Texas. Project will remove or replace 60 miles of fencing with wildlife-friendly fencing to promote pronghorn movement across the landscape, which will result in larger, more resilient pronghorn populations.