



NFWF

Coral Reef Stewardship Fund

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PARTNERS

- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Aramco

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

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OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) announced the latest round of funding for Coral Reef Stewardship Fund projects. Nine new coral reef conservation and management grants totaling \$2.1 million were awarded. The nine awards announced will leverage \$1.2 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of \$3.3 million.

NFWF's Coral Reef Stewardship Fund is the principal public-private partnership established in the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 and reauthorized in 2022 as a part of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act. The fund supports reef resiliency by reducing negative impacts from unsustainable fishing and land-based pollution and provides catalytic funding for innovation and capacity for reef restoration and management.

Since 2000, the program has awarded \$28.5 million across 446 projects, leveraging more than \$36.4 million in conservation resources. Grants have assisted broad-scale coral reef management by establishing new techniques for assessing and monitoring reef health as well as new fishery management models. Site-specific initiatives have developed and implemented watershed management plans, reduced sediment erosion through stream bank stabilization, provided incentives or best management practices on agricultural lands, and supported capacity building of management and conservation organizations to sustain outcomes.

NFWF updated its investment strategy in 2020, in cooperation with NOAA, to incorporate new thinking and breakthroughs in resilience and restoration science, and to increase the scale of projects to magnify its collective impact. The Coral Reef Stewardship Fund is NFWF's primary funding arm under the broader Coral Reefs program, and the funding opportunity that exclusively funds coral reefs.

NFWF manages the Coral Reef Stewardship Fund in partnership with NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program with additional support from Aramco. In addition to providing a common framework for coral reef conservation strategies and monitoring for NFWF, the Coral Reef Stewardship Fund is an incubator for innovation, development and dissemination of best practices for coral management and threat reduction.



In-water coral nursery holding Elkhorn coral | Credit: Coral Restoration Foundation

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Engaging volunteer divers in coral reef monitoring | Credit: Vasa

AMERICAN SAMOA**Supporting Coral Reef Conservation Capacity in American Samoa**

Grantee: Vasa

Grant Amount:..... \$175,000

Matching Funds:..... \$145,000

Total Project Amount: \$320,000

Establish a local nonprofit organization in American Samoa to build capacity and provide support for the management of coral reefs and fisheries. Project will establish expertise and partnerships to assist local practitioners in effectively managing critical coral reefs and watersheds while building public awareness and support.

FLORIDA**Creating an Algal Symbiont Library to Facilitate Resilient Coral Restoration at Scale (FL)**

Grantee: University of Miami

Grant Amount:..... \$300,000

Matching Funds:..... \$112,600

Total Project Amount: \$412,600

Expand access to the beneficial symbiotic algae that corals need to grow and survive. Project will develop 35 new algae cultures important for coral resilience and provide technical assistance to 30 reef restoration practitioners across Florida, helping translate these resources into practical restoration outcomes.

HAWAII**Analyzing Sediment Dynamics to Inform Priority Reef Area Management (HI)**

Grantee: University of Hawaii at Manoa

Grant Amount:..... \$237,600

Matching Funds:..... \$119,500

Total Project Amount: \$357,100

Analyze fine resolution spatial and temporal patterns in sediment plume dynamics in priority reef areas across Hawai'i watersheds. Project will produce, in cooperation with the state Department of Land and Natural Resources, a sedimentation risk mapping tool using previously unavailable data to allow managers to prioritize and manage coastal sediment run-off.

Reducing Land-based Sources of Pollution in Maui By Controlling Wildfire and Hooved Animals (HI)

Grantee: State of Hawaii, Department of Land and Natural Resources

Grant Amount:..... \$289,800

Matching Funds:..... \$30,000

Total Project Amount: \$319,800

Remove hooved animals within newly constructed fence units and support continued firebreak maintenance to reduce vegetation loss and erosion. Project will reduce sediment runoff on more than 9,700 acres of West Maui watersheds and decrease sediment load to coastal coral reefs, improving ecosystem health and resilience.

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Elkhorn coral in Puerto Rico

Reducing Land-based Sources of Pollution to Restore Water Quality along Olowalu Reef in Hawai'i

Grantee: The Coral Reef Alliance

Grant Amount:..... \$175,000

Matching Funds:..... \$220,400

Total Project Amount: \$395,400

Restore native vegetation, generate traditional taro patches and increase water quality monitoring to increase water quality for coral reefs in Olowalu, Hawai'i. Project will install 300 native plants, open five new taro patches and maintain four existing patches to reduce sediment runoff while strengthening local community engagement.

Restoring Molokai Fishponds with Local Partners to Enhance Coral Reef Resilience (HI)

Grantee: The Coral Reef Alliance

Grant Amount:..... \$150,000

Matching Funds:..... \$175,000

Total Project Amount: \$325,000

Expand community-led initiatives to restore and maintain traditional fishponds around Molokai, Hawai'i, resulting in improved water quality for coastal coral reefs. Project will remove 40,000 square feet of invasive species to maintain two existing fishponds and plant 300 native plants to enhance vegetation cover around estuarine habitats.

MULTIPLE STATES

Building Coral Thermal Tolerance through Microbial Intervention (GA, FL)

Grantee: Georgia Institute of Technology

Grant Amount:..... \$297,300

Matching Funds:..... \$135,200

Total Project Amount: \$432,500

Test three approaches to increasing coral resiliency to heat

stress by supporting healthier coral-associated microbes. The approaches include using beneficial bacteria to reduce harmful microbes, transferring microbes from heat-tolerant corals, and testing a safe, weakened form of a coral pathogen to strengthen coral defenses. Project will explore the benefits of beneficial bacteria, microbial transplants and vaccination to improving coral resilience to warming ocean conditions.

Creating Genetic Management Plans for Regional Coral Species (FL, PR, USVI)

Grantee: Coral Restoration Foundation

Grant Amount:..... \$157,000

Matching Funds:..... \$157,000

Total Project Amount: \$314,000

Develop genetic management plans for elkhorn and pillar coral, two priority species for restoration in the U.S. Caribbean, and hold workshops to train practitioners and managers once developed. Project will generate these two management plans to inform future restoration decisions and enable more efficient rehabilitation for species in surrounding coral reefs.

Increasing Coral Larvae Survival to Allow Restoration at Scale Using Hydrogel Encapsulation (CA, FL)

Grantee: University of Miami

Grant Amount:..... \$300,000

Matching Funds:..... \$106,900

Total Project Amount: \$406,900

Develop and test biodegradable gel-based tools to help coral larvae settle and grow with beneficial microbial partners, while supporting the production of genetically diverse corals at a larger scale. Project will address a key bottleneck in restoration at scale by demonstrating successful settlement of 10,000 coral larvae.