



REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

September 14, 2026

NFWF Habitat and Species Priorities within the Chesapeake and Delaware River Watersheds

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) seeks a qualified contractor to research potential habitat and species priorities across the Mid-Atlantic, specifically within the Chesapeake and Delaware River watersheds, and the Atlantic coast from New Jersey to Virginia.

BACKGROUND

NFWF supports efforts to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF funds conservation projects through competitive grants programs that are either national in scope or regionally focused. NFWF's most developed, regional strategies are called "business plans," which lay out the timeframe, goals, conservation actions (investments to be made via grants), monitoring and evaluation framework, and budget. Both the Chesapeake and Delaware River watersheds are guided by business plans¹ that describe current habitat and species priorities; however, the tasks within this RFQ will inform a new business plan encompassing the two watersheds.

Over the past two years, NFWF has begun developing a new generation of business plans with a greater focus on habitat condition and species as indicators that track the results of its investments. These next generation plans cover a 30-year timeframe and develop funding targets based on the conservation need rather than budgets based on expected funding available.²

SCOPE OF WORK

The following tasks constitute the Scope of Work for this Request for Quotations. The Contractor should anticipate regular (e.g., weekly or bi-weekly) calls with NFWF throughout the project to discuss progress, obtain information from NFWF staff, overcome challenges, and develop a strategy for this effort. Please provide timing and cost quotes for each task using the Contractor Budget Template provided. The deliverable for each task will be time and resource dependent, and one or more tasks may be added or removed from the contract SOW at NFWF's discretion.

Task 1: Scoping of Potential Priority Habitat Types

The Contractor will explore potential priority habitat types with the Chesapeake and Delaware River watersheds using standardized habitat classification schema(s), principally through spatial analyses of regional habitat types, land cover, and/or existing spatial habitat prioritization efforts of key partners. NFWF anticipates examining habitats within the following categories: coastal and nearshore habitats,

¹ The [Chesapeake Bay Business Plan](#) was created in 2012, revised in 2018, and scheduled to be completed in 2025 though it is still active. The [Delaware River Watershed Business Plan](#) was created in 2017, revised in 2023, and is due to be completed in 2027.

² For example, see the next generation business plans for [Southern Habitats](#).

river and river corridors, forest and shrubland habitats, agricultural lands, and the developed (urban/suburban) environment. The most appropriate scale or level of habitat type classification will be determined in consultation with NFWF but should begin with EPA Level III/IV Ecoregions and available land cover data. The Contractor should explore whether additional subdivision (or lumping) and/or time series analyses are appropriate for the relevant landscape and potential priority habitat types (e.g., different seral stages of a forest, finer-scale classifications of wetlands, etc.).

At minimum, activities under Task 1 should consider priority habitats identified through relevant State or Regional Wildlife Action Plans, regional Associations of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and habitat types prioritized in existing business plans for neighboring NFWF landscapes (if/as relevant).

Task 1 Deliverables:

1. List of potential habitat types, with summary narrative descriptions, for consideration in business planning.
2. Maps, spatial data, and quantitative data (e.g., summary statistics) to assist NFWF in selecting priority habitat types on which to focus.

Task 2: Research and Analysis of Priority Habitat Types

Based on priority habitat types identified by NFWF following Task 1, the Contractor will assist NFWF in assessing threats and required restoration and management actions needed for each priority habitat type, particularly within the relevant planning landscape(s).

At minimum, activities under Task 2 should include:

- Assessing the degree to which NFWF has prioritized potential priority habitat types in past and current business plans.
- Assessing the degree to which NFWF has invested in each priority habitat type.
- Identifying and assessing existing plans, frameworks, and/or partner commitments for restoring, conserving, and/or managing each priority habitat type, including specific targets for species and habitat restoration as available.
- Identifying restoration, conservation, and management actions needed for each priority habitat type, especially considering existing partner plans, frameworks, and/or partner commitments.

Task 2 Deliverables:

1. A detailed table that uses the NFWF's past habitat type prioritization and investments along with the goals of partner organizations to determine the "phases of readiness" for each habitat type as described in the new [Southern Habitats Business Plan](#).
2. A document to accompany the detailed table that explains the reasons for each determination and the sources of information used.

Task 3: Research and Analysis of Indicator Species for Priority Habitat Types

Based on a list of candidate business plan species identified by NFWF, as well as priority habitat types selected by NFWF within the planning landscape pursuant to Task 2, the Contractor will assist NFWF in determining if candidate species are appropriate indicators of the types of habitat improvement actions and potential non-habitat-related interventions NFWF might expect to fund within priority habitat types in the planning landscape.

For NFWF's purposes, indicator species are considered species, or groups of species, that: reflect the biotic or abiotic state of an environment; reveal evidence for, or the impacts of, environmental change; or indicate the diversity of other species, taxa, or entire communities within an area. Most importantly, indicator species should respond in a predictable way to habitat restoration. In some cases, an index or suite of species may be more suitable than a single species to indicate the success of conservation activities.

At minimum, activities for each species assessed under Task 3 should include:

- Assessing the understanding of required conservation actions for this species in alignment with NFWF's standardized metrics ontology.
- Assessing the significance or importance to the species of the priority habitat types selected by NFWF for the planning landscape pursuant to Task 2.
- Compiling and assessing existing knowledge and data regarding threats, ecology, and life history of the species, including identification of key ecological and/or life history knowledge gaps that may be material for NFWF's business planning purposes.
- Compiling and assessing existing knowledge (e.g., peer reviewed literature) and data on species response to habitat improvement actions and potential non-habitat-related interventions, including identification of outstanding gaps and needs to better establish, test, and/or validate species response to these actions.
- Compiling and assessing existing plans or frameworks that outline goals for this species.
- Identifying and documenting other species, especially those of conservation concern for partners, that would benefit from the same habitat improvements.

Task 3 Deliverables:

1. A table listing each habitat type along with potential indicator species for that habitat type and the conservation actions needed. Table should include advantages and disadvantages for each species, partner interest, as well as sources of information used.
2. A document with in-depth information about each species.

Task 4: Habitat and Species Modeling and Monitoring

Based on priority habitat types and species identified by NFWF pursuant to Tasks 2 and 3, the Contractor will survey and assess existing species and habitat monitoring efforts and habitat suitability and species response models to support NFWF's business planning and evaluation needs.

At minimum, activities under Task 4 should include:

- Identifying and assessing the location and the frequency of existing monitoring efforts and available data in the planning landscape that can be used to measure species response to potential habitat improvement actions and non-habitat-related interventions.
- Assessing whether existing monitoring will continue in supporting NFWF's ability to measure and track outcomes over time.
- If such monitoring is lacking for a potential indicator of species, a detailed memo that discusses how the species could be monitored to measure effectiveness of conservation actions, including the level of effort and cost estimates.
- Identifying existing habitat suitability and species response models NFWF can use or build upon for business planning and evaluation needs.

Task 4 Deliverables:

1. A report including updated deliverables for Task 1-3.
2. A stand-alone document (or chapter to the previous deliverable) that describes the monitoring approaches and challenges within each habitat and for each potential indicator species.
3. An upload of available spatial data depicting the output of monitoring efforts or identified models and associated publications describing the methodologies.
4. A briefing for NFWF science and program staff to present the results of Tasks 1-3 and discuss potential goals based on available data.

REQUIRED EXPERTISE

The successful offeror will have significant expertise (either alone or as part of a consortium) in the following areas:

- Demonstrated knowledge of terrestrial and aquatic habitats.
- Familiarity with the Chesapeake Bay and Delaware River watersheds and their conservation issues.
- Geographic information systems software (e.g., ArcGIS).
- Working with key stakeholders from federal or state wildlife/ natural resource management agencies, academia, and not-for-profits.
- Exceptional ability to organize and prioritize work and meet deadlines.

CRITERIA FOR COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Proposals will be evaluated and scored on the following criteria. Offerors should organize their Proposal Narrative based on these sections:

1. **Understanding of the Scope of Work.** The Scope of Work must demonstrate an understanding of the goals of the activities involved. This section should include a description of how you will communicate with NFWF and program stakeholders and report on progress, results, and deliverables. Weight: 10%
2. **Technical Approach.** The proposed technical approach for conducting the tasks should clearly describe the proposed methods necessary to conduct the project. The section must demonstrate

that those methods are robust and appropriate for conducting the project and address any areas of complexity or uncertainty associated with conducting the project. Weight: 20%

3. **Qualifications of Proposed Personnel.** This section should clearly describe which tasks each member of the team will conduct and how their training and experience provide the requisite experience to do so successfully. Weight: 20%
4. **Contractor's Past Performance.** The proposal should include information on the primary investigator(s)'s past performance experience in [the requested field, as listed above in 'Required Expertise'](#). List recent (last 2-5 years) accomplishments and previous services related to the technical expertise offered. If subcontractors are to be used, information should be provided that demonstrates their past performance as well. Describe how that past performance is applicable to this evaluation. Weight: 20%
5. **Budget.** The proposed budget should itemize work in sufficient detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the appropriateness of the entire funding request. You must use the linked Contractor Budget Template. You may add columns to the template for additional tasks if needed but should not make any other changes. If applicable, please include the proposed budget for equipment purchase in the proposal separate from the Contractor Budget Template. Weight: 30%

ELIGIBLE OFFERORS & CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Eligible applicants include institutions of higher education, other nonprofits, commercial organizations, international organizations, and local, state, and Indian tribal governments.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it does not currently have any apparent or actual conflict of interest, as described herein. In the event an offeror currently has, will have during the life of the contemplated contract, or becomes aware of an apparent or actual conflict of interest, in the event an award is made, the offeror must notify NFWF in writing in the Statement of Quotations, or in subsequent correspondence (if the issue becomes known after the submission of the Statement of Quotations) of such apparent or actual conflicts of interest, including organizational conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest include any relationship or matter which might place the Contractor, the Contractor's employees, or the Contractor's subcontractors in a position of conflict, real or apparent, between their responsibilities under the award and any other outside interests, or otherwise. Conflicts of interest may also include, but are not limited to, direct or indirect financial interests, close personal relationships, positions of trust in outside organizations, consideration of future employment arrangements with a different organization, or decision-making affecting the award that would cause a reasonable person with knowledge of the relevant facts to question the impartiality of the offeror, the offeror's employees, or the offeror's future subcontractors in the matter. Upon receipt of such a notice, the NFWF Contracting Officer will determine if a conflict of interest exists and, if so, if there are any actions to be taken by the offeror to reduce or resolve the conflict. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies NFWF may result in the proposal not being selected for award.

By submitting a proposal in response to this solicitation, the offeror warrants and represents that it is eligible for award of a Contract resulting from this solicitation and that it is not subject to any of the below circumstances:

Has any unpaid Federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an Contract with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Was convicted (or had an officer or agent of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any Federal or State law within the preceding 24 months (about 2 years), where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government; or

Is listed on the General Services Administration's, government-wide System for Award Management Exclusions (SAM Exclusions), in accordance with the OMB guidelines at 2 C.F.R Part 180 that implement E.O.s 12549 (3 C.F.R., 1986 Comp., p. 189) and 12689 (3 C.F.R., 1989 Comp., p. 235), "Debarment and Suspension, " or intends to enter into any subaward, contract or other Contract using funds provided by NFWF with any party listed on the SAM Exclusions in accordance with Executive Orders 12549 and 12689. The SAM Exclusions instructions can be found here: <https://www.sam.gov/SAM/>

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Proposals must be submitted under the same cover at the same time, in three distinctly labeled and separate documents: 1) Technical Proposal, 2) Budget, and 3) Evidence of Financial Stability. Interested parties should submit proposals electronically to Ainsley Stewart (Ainsley.Stewart@nfwf.org), using the requirements below:

1. Technical Proposal

- Format: Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF with a font size no smaller than 11 pt.
- Contact information: Primary contact person, company name, address, phone, email, website, DUNS number, and EIN/Taxpayer ID#.
- Narrative: Concise (10-page limit) description of the work plan and a summary of the applicant's expertise and experience, organized by the Criteria for Competitive Applications.
- Biographies: Resumes and/or Vitae of key staff and their role in the proposed work area (no page limit).
- References: List at least two clients who have received services from the applicant that are similar in nature to the proposed work; include names, phone numbers, and email address.

2. Budget: The budget proposal must be submitted using the provided Contractor Budget Template.

3. Evidence of Financial Stability: The applicant shall provide proof of financial stability in the form of financial statements, credit ratings, a line of credit, or other financial arrangements sufficient to demonstrate the applicant's capability to meet the requirements of this solicitation.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

A panel of NFWF staff will review proposals. Offerors may be asked to modify objectives, work plans, or budgets prior to final approval of the award. Only one award will be made for this project. If multiple institutions are involved, they should be handled through subcontracts.

COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS

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 can 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.

Compliance with American Security Drones Act (ASDA)

Pursuant to the American Security Drone Act (ASDA), effective December 22, 2025, applicants proposing activities funded in whole or in part with federal funds may not use, operate, or purchase any drone or uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) included on the Covered Foreign Entities (CFE) List. This prohibition applies to both new purchases and continued use of existing UAS, including certain widely used commercial platforms, such as DJI and Autel. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that all proposed and existing UAS used in connection with federally funded activities comply with applicable federal law and are not included on the CFE List. Noncompliance may affect eligibility for funding.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

October 1, 2026	Deadline for questions about the solicitation to NFWF. Offerors should submit questions regarding this solicitation via email to Ainsley Stewart (Ainsley.Stewart@nfwf.org). NFWF will post all the questions and responses to all questions so that all offerors have access to them at the same time. In order to provide equitable responses, all questions must be sent to NFWF no later than 5:00 PM ET on October 1, 2026.
October 2, 2026	NFWF will post the questions submitted regarding the solicitation and responses on the NFWF website at NFWF.org/XX .
October 9, 2026	Deadline for receipt of proposals. Proposals must be sent electronically as an email attachment to Ainsley Stewart (Ainsley.Stewart@nfwf.org) by 5:00 PM ET on October 9, 2026. Proposals must be provided in Word format or searchable PDF.
November 1, 2026	Contract start date



December 17, 2026	Tasks 1-2 deliverables due
January 29, 2027	Task 3 deliverables due
March 19, 2027	Task 4 and all final deliverables due