# 2019 BRING BACK THE NATIVES
## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Pre-Proposal Due Date:          **Thursday, June 27 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**
Full Proposal Due Date:          **Thursday, August 22 by 11:59 PM Eastern Time**

## OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is requesting proposals to restore, protect and enhance native fish species of conservation concern, especially in areas on or adjacent to federal agency lands. Up to $510,000 in funding is available through support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bass Pro Shops and the Brunswick Public Foundation.

## GEOGRAPHIC/PROGRAM FUNDING PRIORITIES

In 2019, the Bring Back the Natives program will provide funding to projects that produce measureable outcomes for native fish species of conservation concern. Priority projects will address the leading factors in native fish species decline such as habitat alteration, environmental change and invasive species. Projects benefiting one or more of the following native fish species and focal geographies are priorities for funding. Activities referenced in a NFWF business plan or a well-developed, comprehensive conservation strategy targeting these geographies/species will be most competitive.

- Pacific lamprey, Chinook salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River Basin.
- Salmon in the Central and Northern California coasts.
- Intermountain West native trout and char including Yellowstone/Snake River, Colorado River, San Juan, and Greenback cutthroat trout, bull trout, Apache trout, and Gila trout.
- Native desert fishes in the arid southwest, including sucker, dace, pupfish, and other species, especially those with overlapping distributions with other native fish species of conservation priority.
- Great Lakes native fishes, including lake sturgeon, northern pike and eastern brook trout.
- Southern and southeastern native fish, especially endemic species of concern in the Cumberland, Tennessee and Mobile (Alabama/Coosa) River drainages.
- Native fish of eastern U.S. rivers, especially river herring and American shad in the Chesapeake and Delaware watersheds.
- National Scope – See *Innovation* within the Priority Activities below.

# PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

Restoration activities that address key limiting factors for focal species are priorities for the Bring Back the Natives program. These include:

- *Restoring Connectivity* — removal of culverts and passage barriers or flow restoration to connect fish to key spawning, rearing and refuge habitats. Proposals that describe how addressing a fragmentation issue fits into a broader connectivity strategy for a given watershed will be most competitive (e.g., culvert to be removed was ranked as the highest priority in a comprehensive culvert assessment).

- *Restoring Riparian, Instream Habitat, and Water Quality* — improvement of instream habitat through hydrologic restoration, secondary channel reconnection to tributary/mainstems, and levee removal, breaching or setback to reconnect rivers to their floodplains; habitat complexity enhancement through large boulder addition, log jam creation, and wood recruitment improvement to streams through upland and riparian forest management; grazing management and the replanting of riparian areas with native vegetation to reduce stream temperature and enhance reciprocal exchanges between aquatic-terrestrial habitats; reduction of sediment delivery to streams through road maintenance/management; channel stabilization and re-aggradation through beaver restoration.

- *Invasive species management* — eradication or control of invasive species that fundamentally alter habitat for native fish species or compete/hybridize with focal species of conservation concern. Proposals related to this activity should describe the context of the effort, i.e., is this a perpetual management issue, or eradication possible. If the proposal seeks short-term support for a longer-term invasive species removal effort the proposal should describe the timeline and overall estimated cost of the longer-term effort.

- *Innovation* — development of decision support tools and innovative approaches to fish conservation including landscape-scale assessments to determine where to implement restoration to maximize native fish recovery; piloting innovative restoration techniques; the identification of key flow restoration thresholds that enhance fish habitat and water quality in flow-limited systems; and innovative public outreach methods such as those that crowd-source data/information needed for native fish conservation.

# PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grant projects, Bring Back the Natives has a list of metrics in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for reporting (commonly used metrics are shown in the table below). We ask that you select the most relevant metrics from this list for your project (**at least one but no more than three in most cases**). If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Kirstin Neff (mailto:Kirstin.Neff@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

| Conservation Action Proposed | Activity Category in Application | Metric | Directions for Using and Interpreting Metrics |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fish passage improvements (i.e. culvert replacements, barrier removals) | Fish passage improvements | # fish passage barriers rectified | Enter the number of fish passage barriers improved to allow fish passage or removed. Clearly define in the notes the type of barrier and anticipated change in fish passage from the project and the context of this barrier(s) (i.e. 1 of 3 prioritized for this tributary, etc.) |
| Fish passage improvements (i.e. culvert replacements, barrier removals) | Fish passage improvements | Miles of stream opened | Enter the number of miles between the barrier removal/improvement site to the site of the next barrier/blockage upstream or the headwaters (whichever comes first). Provide a narrative of how this metric will be quantified in the notes section. |
| Restore flow to stream (i.e. Improved irrigation practices, restore hydrology) | Restoring hydrology | Additional acre feet in stream/lake | Enter the number of **additional** acre feet of water entering the system per year as a result of BMPs, water transactions, hydrologic restoration, etc. undertaken as part of your project. Clearly describe the monitoring methods for this metric in your notes section. |
| Stream restoration/Aquatic habitat complexity (i.e. Instream and riparian restoration, woody material, streambank restoration) | Riparian restoration | Miles restored | Enter the number of miles from this project for which habitat quality has been restored to support/increase target fish presence. If there are multiple activities happening at different parts of the stream you can break out in the notes the 'distance' of impact for each activity. If you are restoring other wetland habitat please explain in the notes and convert acres to miles. |
| Monitoring population response (i.e. reduction in invasive species or increase in presence/use of habitat before and after project, restocking survival) | Population | # individuals | Enter the number of target population individuals before and after project improvements to the target stream/lake/wetland. This metric should be used if it is anticipated that the target population will utilize habitat within the project period or if an existing monitoring program for habitat use or invasive species is in place and you are evaluating change based on conservation action. Clearly define the target species you will be monitoring **and** your methods for establishing baseline and monitoring change in the population. |
| Engaging community volunteers in conservation activities | Volunteer participation | # volunteers participating in projects | Enter the number of volunteers participating in the project. Use the notes section to highlight if there are specific groups like fisheries associations, youth, veterans that are targeted for participation. |
| Habitat improvements or Best Management Practices on private lands | Improved management practices | Acres of private land under improved management | Enter the number of privately owned acres that will directly benefit from activities through this project. |

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| Habitat improvements or Best Management Practices on public lands | Improved management practices | Acres of public land under improved management | Enter the number of publicly owned acres that will directly benefit from activities through this project **and** list the ownership (i.e. US Forest Service). |
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## ELIGIBILITY

Eligible applicants include: local, state, federal, and tribal governments and agencies (e.g., townships, cities, boroughs), special districts (e.g., conservation districts, planning districts, utility districts), non-profit 501(c) organizations, schools and universities.

**Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds**

- Funds from this program cannot support fee title land acquisition projects. However, funds may cover certain transaction costs associated with an acquisition (appraisals, title searches, surveys) and for conservation easements.
- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

Up to $510,000 in grant funds is available. Grant awards generally range in size from $50,000 to $100,000, although grants greater than $100,000 will be considered on a case by case basis.

Applicants must provide at least $1 in matching non-federal funds for every $1 of NFWF grant funds requested. Eligible non-federal matching sources can include cash, in-kind donations, and/or volunteer labor which are directly related to the project proposed for funding.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

**Program Goals and Priorities** – Project contributes to the Program's overall habitat and species conservation priorities, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Competitive proposals will include the following information:

- **Project Need:** Describe the native fish species at risk or potentially at risk, a description of its historic and current range, and its importance as part of the greater aquatic ecosystem, as well as the factors that have caused a decline in the species population(s). Proposals that

effectively communicate the context for the project, in terms of how it fits into a broader restoration effort and why it addresses the most strategic need, will be the most competitive. In general, projects should be part of a larger, comprehensive plans (e.g., NFWF business plans, National Fish Habitat Action Plans (NFHAPs), watershed restoration plans) and result from a prioritization process. Please provide this context within the proposal.

- **Activities/Methods:** Describe how each activity will be implemented and the anticipated timeline. Explain how these activities address the key limiting factors for a species of conservation concern. Describe how these activities relate to established plans (NFWF Initiative business plan, management, conservation, or recovery plans, etc.) and conservation needs. Discuss how this project either initiates or fits into larger efforts in the watershed, or, if this is a stand-alone project, how it will succeed in and of itself in restoring, protecting, or enhancing the species population(s).

- **Long-Term Conservation Outcome(s):** Discuss the quantifiable/measurable long-term outcome(s) for fish habitat or populations that will be achieved, including how the project will enhance resilience to changing environmental conditions in native fish populations.
    - If the project supports implementation of a NFWF Initiative describe: 1) how the project helps achieve the goals described in the business plan of that Initiative, 2) how the project supports one or more of the strategies laid out in the NFWF business plan, and 3) how the proposed work supports efforts within the focal geography of the business plan.
    - If the project supports implementation of the National Fish Habitat Action Plan (NFHAP) and a Fish Habitat Partnership, describe how the project meets one or more of the NFHAP goals and strategies and how the outcomes will be measured and reported consistent with NFHAP guidelines. *If the project has a NFHAP nexus, applicants are encouraged to include a letter of support from the relevant Fish Habitat Partnership with their proposal.*

**Technical Merit** – Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design and implementation to ensure activities are technically-sound and feasible.

**Cost-Effectiveness** – Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation may include, but is not limited to, an assessment of either or both direct and indirect costs in the proposed budget. The federal government has determined that a *de minimis* 10% indirect rate is an acceptable minimum for organizations without a NICRA, as such NFWF reserves the right to scrutinize **ALL** proposals with indirect rates above 10% for cost-effectiveness.

**Transferability** – Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

**Communication** – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences.

**Conservation Plan and Context** – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

**Monitoring** – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

**Long-term Sustainability** – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

**Past Success** – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

**Partnership** – An appropriate local partnership exists to implement the project and will sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.) *If the project has any nexus with BLM, USFS, USFWS, and/or tribal lands or trust resources, please discuss their involvement in the project and request a letter of support from the appropriate office.*

## OTHER

**Budget** – Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's Budget Instructions cost categories.  Federally-funded projects must be in compliance with OMB Uniform Guidance as applicable.

**Matching Contributions** – Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.

**Procurement** – If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not constitute NFWF's express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively.  When procuring goods and services, NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

**Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support** – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF's financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

**Receiving Award Funds** – Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request

funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

**Compliance Requirements** – Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

**Permits** – Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the United States, **NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal, even for those proposing to acquire permits, so that a better understanding of the permitting needs are in place.**

**Federal Funding** – The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

## TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the [Bring Back the Natives program page](#) of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

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| Pre-Proposal Due Date | June 27, 2019, 11:59PM, Eastern |
| Invitations for Full Proposals Sent | July 2019 |
| Full Proposal Due Date | August 22, 2019, 11:59PM, Eastern |
| Review Period | August-September 2019 |
| Awards Announced | November 2019 |

## HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through NFWF's Easygrants system.

1. Go to [easygrants.nfwf.org](#) to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information.

2. Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.

3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

## APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A PDF version of this RFP can be downloaded at Bring Back the Natives.

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded here. Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on NFWF's Applicant Information webpage.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact: Kirstin Neff, Kirstin.Neff@nfwf.org, 303-222-6485

For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact: Easygrants Helpdesk
Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail: 202-595-2497
Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.
Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.