

## ***Request for Proposals:***

### ***NRCS and NFWF Partnership in the Gulf States Video Production***

#### **BACKGROUND:**

Private land makes up 86 percent of the land area of the five Gulf coast states. In the Gulf region, private landowners in general, and farmers and ranchers in particular, are essential partners in conserving natural resources.

That is why the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) decided to build on their successful history together by launching the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Partnership in 2014. The Partnership was designed to leverage NFWF's then-newly established [Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund](#) (GEBF) and to accelerate Gulf Coast private lands conservation. The Partnership is focused on conserving land, improving water quality and restoring wetlands, while at the same time sustaining agricultural production across the region. NFWF and NRCS are using their respective authorities – the GEBF as well as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) – to support complementary projects, the synergies of which will leave lasting conservation legacies in priority landscapes across the five Gulf States.

The partnership has significantly expanded conservation efforts with private landowners and operators who might not otherwise have been eligible to participate in existing recovery programs. The partnership began with a \$20 million investment from NFWF, matched by a \$20 million investment from NRCS. Over the last 10 years, additional commitments have grown the total obligated funding to more than \$71.5 million.

Projects under this partnership have conducted wetland conservation, stream and riparian buffer restoration, farm and ranch land protection, improvement of soil health, and wildlife habitat enhancement in six priority landscapes: Bahia Grande in south Texas, the Texas mid-coast, the Chenier plain of Texas and Louisiana, the Mississippi and Alabama coast, the Apalachicola and Suwannee watersheds, and southwest Florida.

Conservation grants awarded through this program have supported priority species like reddish egrets, black skimmers, mottled ducks, whooping cranes and 85 percent of the world's population of wintering redhead ducks. Additionally, these grants have protected the viability of the region's agricultural economy by reducing the threat of incompatible development and preserving farms that produce rice, crawfish, cattle, row-crop agriculture and timber production.

#### **ABOUT NFWF/HOW WE WORK**

Since our creation by Congress in 1984, NFWF has grown to become the nation's largest conservation foundation. We work with both the public and private sectors to protect and restore our nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats.

NFWF supports conservation efforts in all 50 states and U.S. territories. Our projects – more than 22,000 since our founding – are rigorously evaluated and awarded to some of the nation's largest environmental organizations, as well as some of the smallest. We neither advocate nor litigate. Instead, NFWF focuses on bringing all parties to the table, getting results and building a better future for our world. Our total conservation since our founding now exceeds \$10 billion.

NFWF specializes in leveraging partnerships with individuals, government agencies, nonprofit organizations and corporations. Together, we protect and restore imperiled species, promote healthy oceans and estuaries, improve working landscapes for wildlife, advance sustainable fisheries and conserve water for wildlife and people. NFWF currently works with 15 federal partners and more than 45 corporate and foundation partners.

NFWF is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We are governed by a 30-member Board of Directors approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

### **HOW WE WOULD LIKE TO TELL THIS STORY**

We will work with a third-party video production company to produce a number of short videos (see below) to best tell the story of the partnership and the conservation results it is enabling.

Examples from NFWF's video collection can be found here:

<https://www.nfwf.org/media-center/videos> Elements in the video should include:

- Excellent production values
- Creative and dramatic pacing
- Natural, compelling interviews with
  - Grantee No. 1 (TBD)
  - Grantee No. 2 (TBD)
  - Grantee No. 3 (TBD)
  - Grantee No. 4 (TBD)
  - NRCS Personnel
  - NFWF Personnel
- Original or stock footage of terrestrial and aquatic species
- Importance of the NFWF/NRCS partnership
- Focus on generating measurable results for wildlife and habitats
- Funding partner recognition via logos

### **PROJECT SPECS**

- **Final delivery of all products is expected no later than January 1, 2025**
- Final products: a 4–5-minute master video optimized for website display, a 60-second cut-down version of the master for social media, and four (4) 60-90 second cut-downs focused on the individual projects.
- Drone capability is a necessity.
- Budget should include potential use of stock footage – especially for wildlife and if weather doesn't cooperate.
- Budget should include expected travel costs.
- At conclusion of project, a hard drive with final cuts and all footage shot will be provided to NFWF. Files should be organized in a basic fashion.
- NFWF and its partners must be given unrestricted use of all footage, in perpetuity.
- One NFWF staffer will be present for the shoot.

## EXPECTED TIMELINE

June 21	Proposals due
July 16	Vendor selection
July-August	Contracting, pre-production
Sept.	Eight-day shoot at locations
Oct.-Dec.	NFWF and partner review; final cut

## BUDGET

Projected budget: \$80,000 - \$90,000, and not to exceed \$95,000.

## POTENTIAL LOCATIONS

- Mayakka watershed in Florida

Working rangeland protected through easements in Mayakka Watershed headwaters.

The Myakka watershed – which includes a designated Wild and Scenic River, an Important Bird Area, and a winter refuge for the Florida manatee – is a wilderness in the heart of a rapidly developing landscape. The river flows 66 miles, from its headwaters in rural ranch lands south to the Charlotte Harbor estuary. The Myakka watershed is a high priority for numerous conservation organizations, evidenced by an existing network of over 110,000 permanently conserved acres. The NRCS – NFWF partnership, with leadership from the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, is adding over 5,500 acres to this network through five closed or pending easements. A NFWF-funded study will guide hydrologic restoration across several adjacent properties.

The Myakka landscape is itself part of a larger corridor envisioned to stretch all the way to the Everglades ecosystem to support population expansion of the endangered Florida panther. This Partnership, along with The Nature Conservancy and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, has acquired and restored 1,278 acres of easements along the Caloosahatchee River, a dispersal area key to panther recovery.

- Coastal Mississippi

Mississippi Sandhill Crane Refuge National Wildlife Refuge – <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/mississippi-sandhill-crane>

Look in any direction at Mississippi Sandhill Crane National Wildlife Refuge and you look back to an earlier time along the Gulf Coast. The landscape is flat, like a prairie. The ground, blanketed with impervious clay soil, is waterlogged and acidic. Yet here, a rich, colorful blend of rare orchids, carnivorous plants and other ground cover thrive under the scattered pines in one of the most species-rich plant communities in North America. This is the wet pine savanna ecosystem – the critical habitat for endangered Mississippi sandhill cranes, migratory songbirds and waterfowl, and many other wildlife species. The refuge protects and restores the last remaining wet pine savanna in the United States, and thus, ensures the survival of the rare and magnificent Mississippi sandhill crane.

- Alabama

Canon Farm – South Mobile County – Working cattle ranch with freshwater impoundments to benefit migratory waterfowl, and stream buffers to protect water quality. The coastal counties of Mississippi and Alabama support a range of row crop agriculture, cattle and timber production. Incorporating best management practices into these operations can improve water quality in downstream bays and estuaries. Increasing technical assistance capacity can also accelerate the rate conservation practices are adopted. The Partnership, supporting groups like the Mississippi Land Trust and Alabama Wildlife Federation, has worked with more than 300 agricultural producers and forest landowners in the region and improved habitat management on over 90,000 acres. Our projects have also increased conservation delivery capacity in the two states – for example, by providing prescribed fire and stewardship training to over 50 veterans and underserved youth.

- Chenier Plain (Louisiana)

The Chenier Plain region – stretching from Galveston Bay, Texas, to Vermilion Bay, Louisiana – provides countless examples of managing land for the mutual benefit of agricultural producers and wildlife. Coastal wetlands provide storm surge protection to the inland farms that produce rice, crawfish and cattle. Ricelands, with their levees and water control systems already in place, can be managed to provide significant habitat to waterfowl and shorebirds. With the impact of erosion and sea level rise on coastal marshes, managed ricelands have become increasingly important to waterbirds. Rice farms themselves are facing a rising risk of land use conversion, and wildlife conservation income – hunting leases, financial assistance programs and working lands easements – can help these producers stay in business. Supporting the work of groups like Ducks Unlimited through MBHI, EQIP, ACEP and GEBF, together NFWF and NRCS have enhanced over 72,000 acres of rice and coastal wetland habitat with over \$6.5 million in new funding. The partnership is also permanently protecting an additional 5,800 acres of habitat, including the first potential NRCS Agricultural Land Easement in Louisiana.

### **POTENTIAL LOGISTICS**

Estimated eight-day shoot, depending on availability and other factors TBD.

- DAY ONE: Travel to and scout Location 1 (Florida)
- DAY TWO: Shoot location 1
- DAY THREE: Travel to and scout locations 2 and 3 (Alabama/Mississippi)
- DAY FOUR: Shoot location 2
- DAY FIVE: Shoot location 3
- DAY SIX: Travel and scout location 4 (Louisiana)
- DAY SEVEN: Shoot location 4
- DAY EIGHT: Travel home

### APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

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