



ROCKY MOUNTAIN RANGELANDS PROGRAM – 2024 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar ([View Recording](#)): **Thursday, June 20th, 2024, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm ET**
Full Proposal Due Date: **Tuesday, August 6th, 2024, by 11:59 pm ET**

OVERVIEW

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) is soliciting proposals for projects that voluntarily conserve, restore, and improve habitat in the Intermountain West. The objective of the Rocky Mountain Rangelands Program (RMR) is to work in focal landscapes in the region to restore and conserve wildlife species associated with sagebrush, irrigated meadows and aquatic systems while conserving the phenomenon of large mammal migration. Competitive proposals submitted under this RFP will support voluntary strategic projects that accelerate and implement conservation practices as identified in the [Rocky Mountain Rangelands Business Plan](#). The following practices will be given priority consideration during this funding cycle:

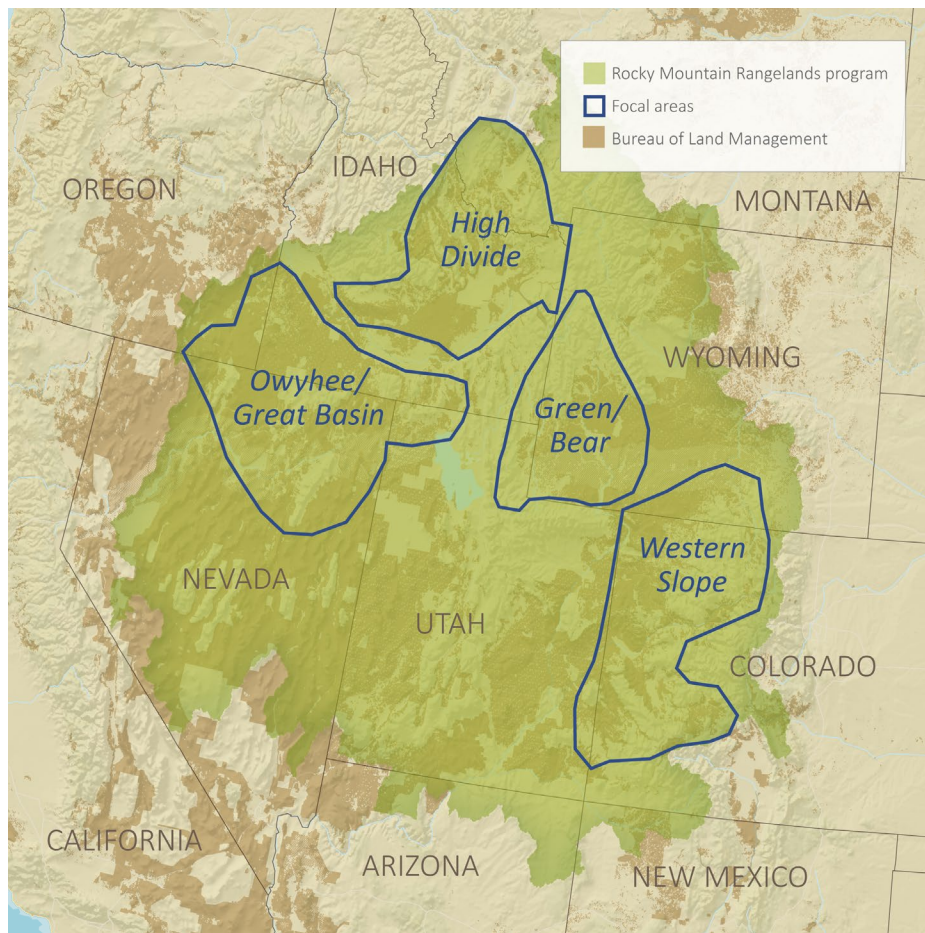
- Projects that promote innovations in grazing management that result in sustainable livestock production, enhanced wildlife habitat and improved ecosystem services including increasing carbon sequestration
- Innovative and strategic management of annual invasive grasses
- Habitat enhancement through mesic area/wet meadow, sagebrush restoration and strategic conifer removal on Bureau of Land Management lands that may also include cross jurisdictional ownership
- Promote the removal or modification of fence or other anthropogenic obstructions to increase landscape permeability for wildlife
- Provide ranchers and community-led organizations with technical assistance to accelerate on-the-ground delivery and implementation of conservation and improved grassland management practices
- Building capacity through boots-on-the-ground positions which provide technical assistance to landowners that aligns with Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) priorities and increase landowner enrollment in Farm Bill programs
 - **IDAHO FOCUS**: There is dedicated funding available to support two positions in Idaho to work with NRCS staff and partners engaged in the Big Game Migration Initiative to develop an approach where existing Farm Bill programs could be strategically implemented in a way that maximizes benefits to both migrating animals and the working lands that support them.
 - **UTAH FOCUS**: There is dedicated funding available in Utah to facilitate implementation of conservation practices on working lands that will benefit wildlife and habitat by restoring, enhancing and/or managing rangeland habitats. Funding is available to support positions which will increase the pace and scale of voluntary perpetual conservation easements through Agricultural Conservation Easement

Program - Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) delivery and support technical assistance pertaining to Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) delivery on existing RCPPs in Utah.

Preference will be given to projects that accelerate adoption of the most cost effective and sustainable approaches that exhibit a high likelihood of success. Projects with clear and direct benefits to sagebrush sparrow, sage thrasher, mule deer, pronghorn, Greater and/or Gunnison sage-grouse will be prioritized. The Rocky Mountain Rangelands Program will award approximately \$5 million. Major private funding provided by Cargill, Taco Bell, Nestlé, Capri Holding Ltd., with federal funding from the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Projects within the green polygon below will be considered. Preference will be given to projects within the following focal areas: Owyhee/Great Basin, High Divide, Green/Bear, and Western Slope. Utah NRCS funding is eligible state-wide and Idaho NRCS funding is eligible in the green polygon in Idaho.



PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Much of the Intermountain West is checkered by mixed ownership. Generally, throughout the West land ownership adheres to the following pattern: the lower elevation water-rich properties tend to be privately owned, the more arid uplands are typically federally owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and lands located in upper watersheds are frequently managed by the U.S. Forest Service. When additional state land and other holdings are included, the ability to manage across a landscape becomes complex. Capacity to communicate and assist with management, restoration and enhancement of habitat will address conservation bottlenecks in communities throughout the West. Priority will be given to projects in Idaho that result in a reduction of invasive annual grasses and maintenance/increase of desired perennial plants (Idaho Cheatgrass Challenge) as well as projects that include a focus on restoration and enhancement of mesic wet meadows on BLM and neighboring land.

Proposals must specifically address how projects for which funds are requested will directly and measurably contribute to the accomplishment of one or more program goals. The Rocky Mountain Rangelands Program seeks projects in the following program priorities:

1: Management/local eradication of invasive annual grasses (cheatgrass, ventenata, or medusahead) on sagebrush rangelands in Idaho

Annual invasive grasses have impacted over 52 million acres of the American West reducing forage capacity of rangelands resulting in negative economic impacts on rural communities, altering and increasing catastrophic wildfire in both size and frequency and vastly altering wildlife habitat. To proactively address the spread of these species NFWF will consider projects in Idaho that apply integrated, ecologically-based invasive plant management strategies that result in a reduction of invasive annual grasses and maintenance/increase of desired perennial plants. Priority will be given to projects that:

- Are located within existing conservation priority areas (e.g., sage-grouse priority areas)
- Strategically address recent or low-density annual grass invasion sites
- Contain monitoring and outreach/demonstration components that share results, successes and lessons learned with other land managers through a dedicated communications component with various publics and promote awareness about invasive annual grass management

2: Mesic area/wet meadow, sagebrush restoration and strategic conifer removal on Bureau of Land Management lands that may also include cross jurisdictional land ownership

Mesic area/wet meadow:

Many of the species found in the sagebrush landscape are adapted to the arid climate and do not rely exclusively on access to water. However, the benefits realized from mesic areas and wet meadows are critical during certain life stages of sagebrush species, including utilization by sage-grouse for brood rearing habitat and critical winter range for elk, mule deer and pronghorn. Threats to these systems include altered hydrology (digging stock ponds or “dirt tanks”), de-watering or diversion of water for irrigation elsewhere, historic eradication of beaver, and

mismanagement of grazing which can lead to erosion issues and an ultimate lowering of the water table.

Techniques such as installation of rock structures or beaver mimicry are often site specific and are just recently being adopted and formalized by many of the state and local land management agencies. There is a significant need for investment in these emerging techniques for both the transfer of knowledge and landscape level implementation. Additional practices may include managing adjacent uplands through grazing management or conifer removal to increase mesic area resiliency.

Conifer encroachment:

Numerous studies produced over the last decade have shown the benefits of removing encroaching conifer to nesting sagebrush obligate songbirds, sage-grouse, groundwater retention as well as forb, grass, and shrub production. Several low impact methodologies are being deployed to address the issue at scale including lop and scatter which involves trained crews cutting trees by hand via chainsaw and scattering the brush so as not to create predator denning sites. The other is mechanical mastication which uses a piece of heavy machinery to splinter the tree into mulch, vastly decreasing the amount of time needed for the tree to decompose. Both practices have shown positive results for multiple sagebrush obligate species.

3: Projects that promote innovations in grazing management that result in sustainable livestock production and enhanced wildlife habitat

Managed grazing of livestock is an ecologically compatible and economically viable land use in the region and as such can be prescribed to meet both wildlife habitat and production goals. The implementation of prescribed grazing techniques is extremely site specific and scale dependent and should factor in landowner needs, species needs, and a suite of abiotic factors including soil types and weather patterns. Projects will promote habitat heterogeneity at ecologically significant scales. Management prescriptions may adjust stocking rates and the timing and intensity of grazing to meet specific habitat outcomes. Projects with formal management agreements will be given preference.

4: Promote the removal or modification of fence or other anthropogenic obstructions that increase landscape permeability for wildlife

Fencing can be a significant obstruction to ungulates and other wildlife, resulting in direct mortality from entanglements, indirect mortality, or reduced fitness from impaired landscape permeability. NFWF will invest in conversion or removal of fences as a low-tech way to make significant impacts on ungulate herds throughout their lifecycle. Fencing can also be an important tool and deployed as a deterrent or to funnel animals to safe passage or more desirable habitats.

5. Build Capacity

Additional funding is available in this RFP specifically for capacity building and technical assistance that aligns with NRCS priorities. Projects working on private, working lands should

provide technical assistance to interested producers to develop management plans, design and implement conservation practices, and participate in Farm Bill programs, especially the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). A particular emphasis should be placed on promoting, designing, and implementing [climate-smart agriculture and forestry \(CSAF\) conservation practices](#) and reducing the Farm Bill practice contracting and implementation backlog. Successful projects will also seek to increase conservation program participation and practice adoption among [Historically Underserved](#) and [Special Emphasis](#) producers and forestland owners.

Please ensure the project is in alignment with NRCS goals and priorities by conferring with the NRCS State Conservationist and their staff in the state in which your project is located. A list of NRCS state contacts can be found [here](#).

- **IDAHO FOCUS**: There is dedicated funding available to support two positions in Idaho to work with NRCS staff and partners engaged in the Big Game Migration Initiative to develop an approach where existing Farm Bill programs could be strategically implemented in a way that maximizes benefits to both migrating animals and the working lands that support them. Additional information on the scope of these positions can be found [here](#).
- **UTAH FOCUS**: There is dedicated funding available in Utah to support positions which will increase the pace and scale of voluntary perpetual conservation easements through Agricultural Conservation Easement Program - Agricultural Land Easements (ACEP-ALE) delivery and support technical assistance pertaining to Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) delivery on existing RCPPs in Utah.

Community Impact and Engagement: Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes. Additionally, projects should engage community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) to help design, implement, and maintain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award.

ALIGNMENT WITH NFWF FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN RANGELANDS LANDSCAPE

There are three funding opportunities that contribute to the [Rocky Mountain Rangelands Business Plan](#): this RFP, [RESTORE Colorado](#), and [Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund](#). Please contact the Program Director, Seth Gallagher (seth.gallagher@nfwf.org), to discuss which funding opportunity is most appropriate for your proposal.

PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Rocky Mountain Rangelands Program has a list of metrics in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants

select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact seth.gallagher@nfwf.org or daley.burns@nfwf.org to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Please ensure that each metric you choose has a **starting value of 0**. NFWF only collects metrics achieved during the span of the grant.

Project Activity	Recommended Metric	Additional Guidance
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Acres of mesic habitat with restored hydrology (private land)	Enter the number of acres with restored hydrology on private land. In the Notes section of this metric, please indicate what type of structure is being installed (i.e., beaver analog, one rock dam, etc.)
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	Acres of mesic habitat with restored hydrology (public land)	Enter the number of acres with restored hydrology on public land. In the Notes section of this metric, please indicate what type of structure is being installed (i.e., beaver analog, one rock dam, etc.)
Mesic areas and wet meadows restoration	# structures installed	Enter the # structures installed (i.e., zeedyk, beaver analogs or similar structures)
Habitat Restoration	Acres restored on private land	Enter # acres of habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow).
Habitat Restoration	Acres restored on public land	Enter # acres of habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow).
Habitat Restoration	Acres restored on tribal land	Enter # acres of habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (barren, cropland, grass, shrub) and post-restoration (broadleaf, conifer, redwood, grassland, shrubland, marsh, wet meadow).
Habitat Restoration	Removal of invasives - Acres restored (woody vegetation)	Enter the number of acres restored by removing woody invasives only. If you are controlling annual invasive grasses please report this in the "Improved management practices - Acres managed to treat annual invasive plants" metric. In the NOTES, specify: desired dominant vegetation (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Swamp), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
Improved Management	Habitat Management – Acres managed to treat annual invasive plants (annual grasses)	Enter the number of acres managed to control annual invasive grasses. If you are removing woody invasives please use the "Removal of invasives - Acres restored" metric. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (annual invasives such as

		cheatgrass, ventenata, and medusahead), desired dominant vegetation (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Swamp), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No).
Improved Management	Habitat Management - Acres with managed grazing (public lands)	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice.
Improved Management	Habitat Management - Acres with managed grazing (private lands)	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice.
Improved Management	Habitat Management - Acres with managed grazing (tribal lands)	Enter the number of acres with managed grazing (i.e., grazing approaches to optimize stocking rates, livestock rotations, utilization rates, and plant rest and recovery, including development of grazing infrastructure). In the Notes, describe the practice.
Migrations and Corridors	Miles of fencing improved	Enter the number of miles of fencing improved
Migrations and Corridors	Miles of fencing removed	Specify the number of miles of derelict fencing removed
Migrations and Corridors	# miles of exclusionary fencing installed for wildlife crossings	Enter the number of miles of exclusionary fencing installed to guide wildlife to wildlife crossings.
Capacity, Outreach, and Incentives	# people with changed behavior	Enter the number of people implementing projects as a result of this grant.
Planning, Research, Monitoring	# studies completed whose findings are used to adapt management/inform mgmt. decisions	Enter the number of studies completed whose findings are used to adapt management and/or inform management decisions.
Habitat Conservation	Acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or > 30-yr)	Enter the number of acres protected under long-term easement (permanent or >30-yr). Assuming the specific parcel(s) has been identified, in the NOTES indicate what % of natural land cover would have been cleared in the absence of the easement(s).

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal governments, educational institutions.
- Ineligible applicants include for-profit entities and unincorporated individuals.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds

- While federal agency partners are eligible applicants, program funds cannot be applied to federal salary.
- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.
- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.
- 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

The Rocky Mountain Rangelands Program has approximately \$5 million available in funding for the 2024 RFP. NFWF anticipates awarding between 10-20 grants with a suggested minimum requested amount of \$100,000. Project duration may extend one to three years. For this cycle 1:1 non-federal match is encouraged as in-kind or cash contributions. Please see the Program [Tip Sheet](#) for additional guidance.

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 goals, and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project addresses one or more of the program priorities.

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.

Partnership and Community Impact – The applicant organization partners and engages collaboratively with diverse local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the proposed project. This ensures long-term sustainability and success of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Non-traditional partners or communities are enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project. Describe the community characteristics of the project area, identify any communities impacted, describe outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Use demographic data to support descriptions and submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed.

Cost-Effectiveness – Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the economically most efficient way to meet project objectives. Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of effective direct/indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget according to the type, size and duration of project and project objectives. Project budgets will be compared to similar projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

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.

Funding Need – Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

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.

OTHER

Applicant Demographic Information – In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic demographic information on applicants and their organizations via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers and will not be considered when making grant decisions. For more details, please see the [tip sheet](#) and the Uploads section of Easygrants.

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.

Environmental Services – NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants, and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in, facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

Intellectual Property – Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF’s website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions), environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. 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.

Quality Assurance – If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation (www.epa.gov/quality). Applicants should budget time and resources to complete this task.

Permits – Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or 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. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

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 [Rocky Mountain Rangelands Program](#) page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information.

Applicant Webinar (View Recording)	June 20 th , 2024, 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm ET
Full Proposal Due Date	August 6 th , 2024, by 11:59 pm ET
Review Period	August – October 2024
Awards Announced	Mid-November 2024

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’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. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.

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 [Tip Sheet](#) is available for quick reference while you are working through your application.

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website’s [Applicant Information](#) page.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact or book a meeting with us [here](#):
Seth Gallagher, Director, Grasslands and Mountain West, seth.gallagher@nfwf.org
Daley Burns, Manager, Rocky Mountain Regional Office, daley.burns@nfwf.org
Kailie Tinnin, Coordinator, Regional Programs, kailie.tinnin@nfwf.org

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.