



# NFWF

## America the Beautiful Challenge

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### PARTNERS

- U.S. Department of the Interior
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Defense
- Native Americans in Philanthropy
- E. Richard King Mellon Foundation

### ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 6,800 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of more than \$10 billion.



Elk herd

### BACKGROUND

The America the Beautiful Challenge (ATBC) is a public-private grant program that funds conservation projects across the nation. Intended to streamline grant funding opportunities for new voluntary conservation and restoration projects around the United States, ATBC consolidates funding from multiple federal agencies and the private sector to enable applicants to conceive and develop large-scale projects that address shared funder priorities and span public and private lands.

Together over the past three years, NFWF and ATBC funding partners — the U.S. Department of the Interior through the Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the U.S. Department of Defense through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program, and Native Americans in Philanthropy — awarded 190 grants totaling more than \$352 million, leveraging close to \$33 million in matching contributions to generate a total conservation impact of approximately \$385 million.

The first two years of ATBC projects are on track to achieve over 300 miles of improved fencing, over 1,500 miles of streams opened for fish passage, over 2,500 acres of restored wetland habitat, and over 80 miles of restored riparian buffers. Projects in year three of the ATBC program are planning to build on these goals with an additional 1,000 acres of wetland habitat restored, 1,200 miles of streams opened for fish passage, 140 miles of riparian buffers restored, over 50,000 trees planted, 21,000 acres of invasive species managed and over 95,000 acres treated to improve wildfire resilience.

(continued)



Golden-winged warbler

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The ATBC seeks to advance conservation and restoration projects that focus on at least one of the following core focal areas:

- Conserving and restoring rivers, coasts, wetlands and watersheds
- Conserving and restoring forests, grasslands and other important ecosystems that serve as carbon sinks
- Connecting and reconnecting wildlife corridors, large landscapes, watersheds and seascapes
- Improving ecosystem and community resilience to coastal flooding, drought and other climate-related threats
- Expanding access to the outdoors, particularly in underserved communities

Collectively, these themes allow applicants to develop landscape-level ATBC projects that address conservation and restoration needs that showcase cumulative benefits to fish and wildlife, carbon sequestration and storage, engage with underserved communities, support community access to nature and help safeguard ecosystems through conservation, resilience-focused and nature-based solutions. These core focal areas will be addressed through five grant categories:

1. **Implementation Grants:** awarded to states, U.S. territories, and federally recognized Tribes to implement projects that address program priorities on public, Tribal and/or private lands.
2. **Planning Grants:** awarded to states, U.S. territories, and federally recognized Tribes to enhance local capacity to implement future on-the-ground actions

that address program priorities through community-based assessments, partnership building, planning, project design and other technical assistance activities.

3. **Sentinel Landscape Grants:** awarded for projects with multiple partners that enhance local capacity to implement future on-the-ground actions or by directly contributing to on-the-ground outcomes, prioritized to Sentinel Landscapes or areas that preserve or enhance military readiness.
4. **National Forest Grants:** awarded for projects on National Forest System lands that achieve the restoration of a forest ecosystem through the removal of vegetation, the use of prescribed fire or the decommissioning of an unauthorized, temporary or system roads.
5. **Private Forests, Rangeland and Farmland Grants:** awarded for projects that support outreach and engagement with private landowners for voluntary conservation efforts on working lands to advance NRCS Working Lands for Wildlife Framework and Initiatives.

This program will streamline and centralize the grant application making it easier for states, Tribes, territories, local governments, non-governmental conservation organizations and others to use one application to potentially access multiple funding sources. Projects are often landscape-scale, span multiple jurisdictions and boundaries, and are made possible through robust, committed partnerships. NFWF continues to seek additional federal and private-sector partners to leverage and enhance the ATBC funding opportunity in the coming years.