



November 29, 2024

Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership Request for
2026 Aquatic Conservation Projects

The America Conservation Enhancement Act was passed in October, 2020 and made significant changes to project requirements and will affect how these project funds are distributed. This request is actually for the FY2026 time period. We will continue trying to find ways to make this work efficiently as we navigate the process.

- All projects must show a minimum of a 1:1 non-federal financial match with the exception of projects proposed by tribal sponsors.
- Protection (including acquisition) projects are eligible.
- All NFHP funded projects must include an outreach/education component.
- Monitoring and evaluation measures must be included as part of the project application.
- Awards under this program are made under the authority of the America's Conservation Enhancement Act—National Fish Habitat Conservation Through Partnerships ([Pub. L. 116-188 \[S. 3051\], 134 Stat. 924-938](#)).
- The National Board for NFHP have identified National Conservation Priorities that can be useful in developing project proposals. ([National Fish Habitat Board Announces 2025 National Conservation Priorities | National Fish Habitat Partnership](#))
- Awards are made under the Assistance Listing Number and Title [15.608, "Fish and Wildlife Management Assistance"](#).
- Entities selected for funding under this program must register in the [System for Award Management](#) (SAM.gov) to do business with the federal government as a financial assistance recipient

It is time to ask for your consideration in submitting habitat project ideas for funding or support from the Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership (GPFHP). The Great Plains FHP is one of twenty partnerships that span the nation under the initiative of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP). The GPFHP area of focus; rivers, streams, riparian corridors and watershed health of the northern half of the Great Plains that include habitats within all or portions of 10 states and 28 Tribes (see map).



PRODUCED BY JAMES
DUNBAR, NORTH DAKOTA
MAP DATE: 2/2016
FILE PARTNERSHIP/VC



This will be our seventeenth year of supporting conservation projects and working toward meeting the goals and objectives set forth in the GPFHP Strategic Plan (prairiefish.org). We have directed funding toward a wide range of aquatic conservation projects that benefit imperiled, endangered and recreational aquatic species. Most projects have received upwards of around \$10K to over \$50K. One of the partnerships' greatest strengths; is working together with partners to provide additional focus and resources for projects that align with the goals and objectives of shared efforts.

With your continued involvement, we can continue to strive toward a more strategic and focused conservation effort for future generations. With help from the habitat assessments, we can have discussions that help the partners bring landscape scaled issues into manageable projects by effectively focusing conservation with greater positive impacts to targeted species.

If you have an aquatic conservation project aligned with the goals and objectives of the GPFHP and need financial assistance, we encourage you to submit a proposal. Please fill out the included application and submit directly to me at Steven_Krentz@fws.gov.

Expected Timeline:

January 14, 2025..... Application/Proposal Deadline

**January-September, 2025 Projects will be evaluated, ranked, approved by FHP Partners
Council & National Fish Habitat Partnership Board**

January, 2026 Announcement of awards to recipients

June-August, 2026 Agreements/Funding awarded 2026

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Steven Krentz, GPFHP Coordinator, at 701-355-8547 or Steven_Krentz@fws.gov.

Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership

Project Application Instructions



Eligible Applicants: Eligible applicants include state and federal management agencies, non-governmental organizations (e.g. conservation groups, community associations, watershed councils, cooperatives, civic groups), municipalities, universities, schools, private landowners, and local and tribal governments.

Eligible Projects: Projects considered for funding must align with the goals and objectives of the GPFHP and may include watershed, riparian or in-stream habitat restoration, barrier removal or construction, population or watershed assessments needed for project evaluation, prioritization and planning, evaluating stream flows or lake water levels, and community outreach and education. Please review our Strategic Plan at [Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership \(prairiefish.org\)](http://prairiefish.org).

What types of projects may NOT be funded?

Funding for projects are managed through FWS as the lead agency for the Department of the Interior. The GPFHP still assumes that funds may NOT be expended on the following activities under Section 1.8 of the original NFHAP Policy 717 FW 1. (If any of these activities is integral to a project under the strategic action plan, funds from other sources can support the activities, but not NFHAP funds. Those other funds may qualify as matching or leverage, however).

Ineligible expenditures.

- (1) Pre-award costs associated with preliminary design, surveys, and appraisals.
- (2) Operation and maintenance of facilities or structures. This applies to buildings and structures only and not to maintenance or construction of earthen structures.
- (3) Actions required by existing regulatory programs, except that funds may support activities under voluntary agreements that exceed regulatory requirements for conserving habitats (e.g., hydropower licensing in which the licensee enters into a voluntary agreement to restore habitat that exceeds regulatory requirements).
- (4) Projects that are primarily research studies (fish habitat assessment projects can be funded and are not considered research).
- (5) Long term monitoring projects (this includes long term monitoring of fish populations)
- (6) Incentive payments.

Project Duration: GPFHP prioritizes projects that can be completed within 18-24 months of receipt of funding. In some cases, GPFHP will consider funding phases or components of larger, long-term projects, as long as funds can be expended, objectives met, and benefits realized within the requisite 24-month period. Project requests for activities beyond 24 months are beyond the limitations that we can entertain at this time.

Available Funding: GPFHP typically allocates a total of \$100-\$200K annually across 3 – 5 individual projects. However, the exact amount of funding available to the partnership varies, annually, with final fund availability usually determined in the spring.

Match Required: Successful proposals should demonstrate close to a minimum 1:1 match or greater, which may include cash, time, materials, or other services. In addition, there are additional funding sources for fish passage projects that can be utilized through our prioritization process to help direct conservation funding.

Deadline: The deadline to submit a GPFHP project for the 2025 NFHP funding cycle is **January 14th, 2025**. In order to help applicants put forward the best possible projects for consideration by the Partners Council, GPFHP has a set of criteria by which projects are evaluated for funding. Applicants should address these criteria in their project applications. Please review the attached materials for project selection criteria and application instructions. All projects submitted are input into the Fish and Wildlife Service Fisheries Information System and sent to the National Board to be considered for funding.

Application Package:

The application package should contain the following four items:

Cover Letter - Include in your cover letter a brief narrative describing the overarching project goals and anticipated outcomes; why GPFHP funds are needed; how GPFHP funds will be spent; and how this project addresses GPFHP and NFHP funding priorities.

Completed Project Application

Detailed Project Budget – Indicate how project funds will be spent in detail

Attachments – A letter of support from the State Fish and Wildlife Agency is required. Other letters of support, designs, planning documents, permits, articles, scientific studies, etc. are optional but encouraged.

Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership Project Application Instructions



Submission Instructions

- Please combine all documents and attachments into a single pdf file. Number each page.
- File names should include the submission date followed by the project name (Example “071512 Prairie Stream Project”)
- Submit electronically as an email attachment to Steven_Krentz@fws.gov.
- Please note, proposals should not exceed 10 pages, not including attachments such as photos, maps, letters of support, etc.

Please note, the Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership will not consider:

1. Late requests.
2. Requests for projects or programs already completed.
3. Refunding projects, programs or items purchased before the project is approved or awarded.
4. Participating in or funding of any political campaign on behalf of any issues, organizations or candidates.

Deadline

- Applications are due by January 14, 2025
- Applications must be received by 12:00 pm Central Standard Time.

The GPFHP Partners Council will review and rank projects after receiving and selected applicants will await final approval and allocation of funds. Selected applications will be reviewed by the National Fish Habitat Board, the Department of the Interior and the US Fish and Wildlife Service for final funding approval in the late summer of 2025. Questions? Please contact Steven Krentz, GPFHP Coordinator, at Steven_Krentz@fws.gov.

Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership Project Selection Guidelines, Evaluation Criteria and Process



The GPFHP Partners Council will review and evaluate proposals based on the criteria listed below and will also consider project rankings from species conservation teams and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional managers. A list of the projects that are selected for funding will be submitted to the National Fish Habitat Partnership Board and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for final approval. Funds typically become available during early to mid-summer following grant approval.

In order to help project proponents put forward the best possible proposals, GPFHP has provided below a set of criteria and considerations by which projects are evaluated for funding. Project proponents must address these requirements, guidelines, and criteria in their project applications.

Requirements

1. Project must be consistent with specific GPFHP goals and objectives as outlined in the GPFHP Strategic Plan (available for download at <http://www.prairiefish.org>).
2. Project must benefit at least one of the GPFHP native species in its historic range.
3. Project proposals must be supported by state and/or federal fish and wildlife management agencies, or tribal governments, within project-area jurisdictions. Project application must include a signature and contact information for a 'sponsoring professional' from a relevant management agency.
4. If project is located on private land, a support letter from the landowner will be required.

General Criteria and Considerations

- Is the project proposal well written and complete; does it provide sufficient information on methodology and monitoring to evaluate the project?
- Does the project address more than one of the goals or objectives listed above and in the GPFHP Strategic Plan, or a priority need or limiting factor in a species conservation, management or recovery plan? If so, please reference and explain.
- Does the project protect or restore a natural process, and/or address a root cause of decline or habitat degradation? Is the project self-sustaining over time, or will it require periodic/regular maintenance? Please describe.
- Does the application establish that the project is technically sound and supported by the best available science, and are the project objectives realistic, measureable, and achievable?

- Does the project convey a large conservation benefit to a GPFHP priority species? If so, how? (Examples: project benefits a broad geographic area; project benefits a small geographic area with extremely high value). Does the project benefit multiple GPFHP or non-GPFHP species?
- Is the project part of a larger restoration effort? If so, describe the overall plan.
- Does the project have a high probability of being completed within the proposed project timeline?
- What % of total project funding is needed from GPFHP funding sources? Is the match clearly identified and secured?
- Is the project budget clearly described and reasonable? Is the benefit high relative to cost?
- Does the project enhance or relate to a previously funded GPFHP or NFHP project?
- Are project outcomes quantifiable; is there a clear explanation of how success will be measured and reported (e.g. stream miles, acres of habitat protected or restored, fish population trends)?
- Are there adequate assurances that the project will be monitored and the benefits maintained over the long term? Are there provisions for operation and maintenance?

Administrative Considerations

- Have required state and federal permits been acquired (i.e. NEPA, 404, SHPO)? Projects with completed environmental compliance will score higher in the ranking criteria.
- Who are the various partners that will participate in the administration and implementation of the project? Is the partner list diverse? Does the partner list include other NFHAP-recognized Fish Habitat Partnerships?
- Does the Application provide adequate information to assess whether the applicant or implementing partners have the experience and capacity to successfully achieve the goals and objectives as described in the proposal?
- Does the project include an outreach and/or education component? (Applicants are encouraged to work with the GPFHP Partners Council to coordinate media and public outreach to raise the profile of GPFHP-funded projects).
- Are the responsible parties for reporting requirements and the successful completion of this proposal clearly identified? Who is a point of contact should the Committee have questions regarding this project?

Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership

Habitat Conservation Project Application



What type of action would you like the FHP(s) to consider?

- Project Funding
- Science and Planning Support
- Project Endorsement (For projects that address any of the goals and objectives of the Great Plains FHP but do not need additional funding)

Contact Information:

Project Officer:

Project Co-Officer:

Name:		Name:	
Affiliation		Affiliation	
Mailing Address:		Mailing Address:	
Email Address:		Email Address:	
Phone Number:		Phone Number:	

Title of the project: (max chars: 100)

Specific waterbody affected:

Watershed Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) to at least the 8 digit level:

Location: (For Latitude and Longitude, use NAD-1983)

Project Name	County	State	Congressional District(s)	Latitude	Longitude
<i>Example: Fish Creek Restoration</i>	<i>Mycounty</i>	<i>NE</i>	<i>NE-03</i>	<i>43.8786</i>	<i>-103.4589</i>

State the proposed accomplishment summary: (max chars: 500). Identify actions to be taken, anticipated ecological response, and benefits to the local economy.

Statement of Need – Explain why the project is necessary and how it fulfills the purposes of the NFHP program.

- A need statement will identify the conservation issue, problem or opportunity to be addressed.
- A need statement will provide evidence such as results from surveys, research or other data to demonstrate that the need is real and not perceived.
- A need statement will identify the negative result of taking no action;

Objective(s) Objectives state the desired outcome of the proposed project in terms that are specific and quantified.

- Objectives are meant to be realistic targets or benchmarks that, if achieved, will resolve the project need.
- Objectives are written in an active tense and use action verbs such as construct, survey, train, research, establish, repair, conduct, provide, acquire.

Methods/Approach. Describes the methods used to achieve the stated objectives. For cooperative agreements, please specify the tasks/deliverables where the Service will be substantially involved in carrying out the objectives of the award.

- Approach describes the specific conservation actions or efforts necessary to accomplish project objectives.
- Approach answers the question of “how” the objectives will be accomplished by describing the actual work that will be done.
- Approach will demonstrate that the agency will use sound design, appropriate procedures, and accepted fish and wildlife conservation, management, or research principles.
- Any deliverables resulting from the funding should be noted in this section

Timetable or Milestones. Describe significant milestones in completing the project and any accomplishments to date.

State, Tribal, or Federal Agency Responsible for Resource Management in area where project will be located: choose all that apply

- Iowa Department of Natural Resources
- Kansas Dept. of Wildlife & Parks
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
- Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
- Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
- North Dakota Game & Fish Department
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks
- Wyoming Game and Fish Department
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Park Service
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- Tribe (name _____)

Contact information for the Lead Biologist at State, Tribal, or Federal Agency

Name:	
Telephone:	
Email:	

Information to support environmental compliance review requirements – the

Service has the responsibility for making the final determination regarding compliance with Federal laws.

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with NEPA.
- Endangered Species Act (ESA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with the ESA.
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – provide any information that may be relevant to compliance with NHPA, such as locations of historic or cultural properties.
- Other Permits – list and provide the current status of any other required Federal permits

Estimated total cost of the project: (this could include any efforts made toward an overall project’s goal, outside of the portion of the project and/or performance period of this project)

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Funding Request:

NFHAP USFWS Funding Request: \$	
Total Partner Match: Inkind –	
 Funding –	
Project Total (including match): \$	

Contributing Partners: Please choose specific partner names and their proposed contributions, including in-kind service cash value (*example: 100 volunteer hours of shoreland restoration Inkind value \$1800*). If your partner is not listed please add each additional partner. Add dollar values in the table.

Partner	Cash	In-kind	Total
Total			

Note: Please try to account for all proposed partners and their cash and in-kind contributions. Remember in-kind contributions can add a significant amount to Partner match so please consider all contributions made to the project effort and convert those into in-kind matching dollars.

Budget Narrative - Describe and justify requested budget items and costs identified on the SF424 budget form. - Provide sufficient information to show that the project is cost effective.
 - Describe any item that requires the Service’s approval (e.g. capital improvements, real property acquisitions, or equipment purchases)

Will public fishing access be improved or made available: YES NO

Amount and Type of Habitat Affected: (may have multiple types)

Riverine in miles	Lake in acres	Wetland in acres	Riparian in miles	Riparian in acres	Upland in acres

Species Targeted for Conservation: (Identify SGCN or ESA category, e.g. Pallid sturgeon – Endangered, Flathead chub - SGCN)

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Conservation Actions Taken: choose all that apply.

- Reconnect aquatic habitat
- Reduce nutrient loading
- Reduce sediment loading
- Restore sediment transport
- Remove fish barrier
- Protect healthy habitat
- Restore natural variability in river and stream flows
- Restore natural variability in water surface elevations in natural lakes
- Control/eradicate invasive species
- Improve physical fish habitat (woody habitat, lunger structures, etc.)
- Other, Explain _____

Information on Key Project Personnel:

- Project Officer
- Assistants
- Financial Administration

Optional) State any additional information describing the importance of this project. (max chars: 1250)

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PHOTOGRAPH(S) OF PROJECT AREA (required)

Please include at least two photographs of proposed project area. Before and after photographs are required after project completion. Each photo should be in JPG format and accompanied by:

- A short, descriptive caption
- Credit: Photographer's name/organization

MAP OF PROJECT AREA

Please upload a map of the project area.

EXAMPLE MAP

