

# FY2018 NFHP Project Application and Selection Guide for the Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership

## **Summary:**

This guidance includes information for preparing and submitting a project proposal through the Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership (Mat-Su Salmon Partnership), a National Fish Habitat Partnership, to receive funding in support of priority conservation activities identified in the Strategic Action Plan (<http://www.matsusalmon.org/what-we-do/types-of-projects/>). The Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee is seeking project proposals from all partnership organizations. Project proposals will be reviewed and ranked during the fall 2017 according to guidelines developed by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership, and approved as contingent until funding is released by the USFWS and the Board of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) by mid-May 2018. Those project proposals selected for funding will be announced after funding becomes available with the passage of the fiscal year 2019 federal budget. Project proponents are advised that funding may be awarded to their organization as late as August 2018.

Project proposals are due via email by close of business on **October 9, 2017**.

Participants need to prepare and submit proposals that describe their project and its benefits for fish habitat. A project proposal includes a project summary (Attachment 1), and a full description (Attachment 2).

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***Who may apply for funding?***

Any individual or organization can apply who has the capacity to receive federal funds and satisfy funding reporting requirements. Go to [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) to learn more about federal funding requirements. If you want to become a [Mat-Su Salmon Partnership](#) partner, download the application from the website (<http://www.matsusalmon.org/sample-page/who-we-are/>) and send to Jessica Speed ([jspeed@tnc.org](mailto:jspeed@tnc.org)). Click here to view [Partnership member list](#).

### ***What types of projects may be funded?***

Habitat-based projects that protect, restore, or enhance fish and aquatic habitats or otherwise directly support habitat-related priorities of the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership by addressing one or more objectives in our [Strategic Action Plan](#). Priority strategies within the plan are listed below.

- Overarching Applied Science Strategies
- Alteration of Riparian Areas
- Filling of Wetlands
- Culverts or Other Structures that Block Fish Passage

- Aquatic Invasive Species

We encourage members to address these identified priority strategies, which will receive additional points in the scoring process (see score sheet). Funding will be announced and awarded in the form of a cooperative agreement by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). It is highly recommended to speak with a contact listed below prior to proposal submittal to discuss projects for applicability, feasibility and general application assistance.

- Jon Gerken (Phone: (907) 271-2776, email: [jonathon\\_gerken@fws.gov](mailto:jonathon_gerken@fws.gov))
- Libby Benolkin (Phone: 907-271-2718, email: [elizabeth\\_benolkin@fws.gov](mailto:elizabeth_benolkin@fws.gov))
- Jessica Speed (Phone: (907) 865-5713, email: [jspeed@tnc.org](mailto:jspeed@tnc.org))

### ***What types of projects may NOT be funded?***

Funding for projects comes from the FWS and follows Policy 717 FW1 <http://www.fws.gov/policy/717fw1.html>. *Ineligible expenditures*. Funds may NOT be expended on the following activities under Section 1.8 of 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 NFHP funds. Those other funds may qualify as matching or leverage, however.

- (1) Pre-award costs associated with preliminary design, surveys, and appraisals.
- (2) Realty costs (e.g., lease or purchase interests in real property or to make rental or other land use incentive payments to landowners).
- (3) Operation and maintenance of facilities or structures. This applies to buildings and structures only and not to maintenance or construction of earthen structures.
- (4) 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).
- (5) Projects that are primarily research studies (fish habitat assessment projects can be funded and are not considered research).
- (6) Long term monitoring projects (this includes long term monitoring of fish populations)
- (7) Incentive payments.

### ***What are the funding limits for a proposal?***

There are no set minimums or maximums but funds are all subject to availability. In past years, the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership has funded 5 to 9 projects a year ranging in costs from \$6,700 to \$50,000.

### ***What is cost sharing?***

For this project application, cost sharing refers to a ratio of matched or leveraged contributions for the proposal compared to the funding request (e.g. 1:1, 2:1, 3:1). Proposals must include a distinction within their budget of funds that *match* and funds that *leverage* the NFHP funds.

Match: Match is non-Federal funding, in-kind contributions or cash. In-kind can be equipment, staff, supplies and volunteer time provided to the project.

Leverage: Leverage includes Federal funding that can be financially valued, but is not counted in the match.

### ***What are the cost sharing requirements for a proposal?***

Proposals are encouraged to demonstrate significant cost sharing which helps the Partnership to compete for funds nationally. Cost sharing may be increased by broadening the number and contributions of partners involved in a proposal. Proposals with cost sharing will be scored at incrementally higher levels based on cost sharing amounts at zero, cost share less than 2:1, 2:1, or 3:1.

### ***When are proposals due?***

Proposals can be submitted from the date of this announcement to October 9, 2017, 5:00 pm Alaska time.

### ***How do I apply for NFHP funding?***

Email an electronic proposal to [elizabeth\\_benolkin@fws.gov](mailto:elizabeth_benolkin@fws.gov) and “carbon copy” [jonathon\\_gerken@fws.gov](mailto:jonathon_gerken@fws.gov) and [jspeed@tnc.org](mailto:jspeed@tnc.org) on or before the deadline. Ensure you receive confirmation of receipt of your proposal by the deadline.

### ***Is there a format for a NFHP proposal?***

We provide a format in Attachments 1 and 2. Attachment 1 is a one to two page project summary, and attachment 2 is a three to eight page full description, including maps, photos, and drawings. Please note attachment 2 has an 8-page maximum. **Proposals exceeding the Attachment 2, 8-page maximum will not be considered for funding.** Use a readable font, size (11 – 12) for both documents. The full description will be used by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee for project ranking. The project summary will be used by the national review board, as they must review over 100 projects. Budget tables, maps, drawings, and photos will count as part of the 2-page summary and 8-page attachment description.

### ***Must a proposal address Climate Change?***

Projects that promote adaptation to climate change are encouraged. (<http://www.fws.gov/home/climatechange/strategy.html>).

### ***What is expected for outreach?***

All projects are encouraged to have an outreach component, whether it is informing the public at a community meeting or creating a small article or news release in the local paper. All funded projects are also expected to present results through an oral presentation or poster at the annual Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium. An abstract describing activities and accomplishments with pictures of the project for the Partnership's website will be required as part of agreement submittals for all funded projects.

### ***Are support letters required?***

Support letters from project partners are encouraged. Landowner support letter(s) are required for any easement or restoration activity proposed. If your project is selected for funding, a signed landowner consent letter is required for on-the-ground restoration projects (template in Attachment 4) as well as a separate list of partners and their contact information.

### ***What about project monitoring?***

Post-project monitoring is highly encouraged and is scored as part of the selection process under 2. Technical Merit (g). Applicants should review Appendix 12 of the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Strategic Action Plan for monitoring guidelines and discuss with FWS contacts if there are any questions.

### ***What criteria are used to score proposals?***

We will use the scoring criteria listed in Attachment 3 to evaluate proposals and they fall under three main categories: Resource Benefits, Technical Merit, and Budget and Cost Sharing. **Please note there have been updates to the scoring criteria from last year. Please carefully review the criteria and point system.**

### ***How will proposals be selected?***

FWS staff will receive applications, and forward to the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering and Science and Data Committees. With technical evaluation from the Partnership Science and Data Committee, the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee will review the proposals using the scoring criteria (Attachment 3). The Steering Committee expects to complete the selection process in December 2017. Top projects will be recommended for funding based on the total amount of project funding allocated for Mat-Su Salmon Partnership projects. A prioritized list of proposals is submitted to a national review board for their review and then sent to the USFWS Director for final approval, a process which is scheduled to be completed in May. Final cooperative agreements will be awarded once USFWS approval is completed but may be awarded as late as August 2018.

***When will project selections be made?***

Applicants will be informed in May 2018 as to the status of their project based on their ranking in the priority list and available funding. As noted, the project selection process is lengthy. For example, in 2011-2014, funds only became available in late June or July. For 2018, expect to be informed about proposal funding May or June with funding availability as late as August. It is highly recommended that this timing is considered when planning project implementation.

***What do I need to know to get started if my project is selected for funding?***

Funds for projects are processed through the FWS and are paid on a reimbursable basis. A FWS project cooperative agreement will be completed with successful applicants by the appropriate FWS staff.

Funding recipients are required to obtain a DUNS number when completing award paperwork before returning it to the FWS for processing. Contact Dun and Bradstreet at the dedicated toll-free DUNS number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or online <https://eupdate.dnb.com/requestoptions/government/ccrreg/>.

Register that specific DUNS number in the “Business Partnership Network / Central Contractor Registry” (CCR or “SAM”) and confirm accuracy of registry information annually thereafter. Visit <http://www.ccr.gov> and click on “Register in CCR.” FWS does not administer the CCR database. Direct all questions to the CCR Assistance Center at 1-888-227-2423. Active registrant status in CCR must be maintained for the entire lifespan of this grant award.

Recipients will also need to complete and submit the Standard Form 424 Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424 series <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>). FWS staff will assist with identifying and filling out this paperwork.

The FWS began using a new Financial and Business Management System (FBMS) on November 7, 2011. Under this system, funding recipients will be required to use the Department of the Treasury's payment system called the Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), an online payment system. If your organization is already participating in ASAP for another federal agency, you will still need to provide this information to the FWS and indicate your ASAP ID. The form is available at: [www.fws.gov/fbms](http://www.fws.gov/fbms). After the FWS verifies your enrollment, you will enter your bank account information into ASAP. When completed, your FWS awards will be connected to your current ASAP account

**Attachment 1 – Project Summary**

Organization and Contact Person:			
E-mail:		Phone Number:	
Project Title (95 characters maximum):			
Funding Request:	Match:	Leverage:	Project Total:
Project Location:			
Project Start Date:		Project End Date:	
Project Summary (500 characters maximum):			
<b><i>Project Description</i></b>			
Resource issue (problem or need) and the specific cause of the issue (350 characters maximum)			
Measurable goals and objectives of the project with reference to the issue (350 characters maximum)			
Benefits to the resource (350 characters maximum):			
Method(s) applied to accomplish the objectives (350 characters maximum):			
Describe how proposed conservation actions will achieve proposed conservation benefits to salmon:			
Key project personnel:			
Project's linkage to a specific goal or objectives in the Partnership's Strategic Action Plan:			

## **Attachment 2 –Format for Mat-Su Salmon Partnership NFHP Proposals**

Project description should be 3 to 8 pages in its entirety, using a readable font size (11 – 12).

**Cover Page:** (optional)

**Date:**

**Project title:**

**Geographic Location (Latitude and longitude):**

**NFHP funds requested:**

**Cost Sharing provided (match + leverage):**

**Project point of contact:** Organization name, contact name, title, phone number(s), and e-mail address and DUNS number (if already have one).

### **Project abstract**

The project abstract describes the type and duration of activity that will take place with the NFHP funds. This should be a quarter to one-half page in length.

### **Project narrative**

The project narrative clearly identifies the issues the proposal will correct or help solve for the benefit of fish habitat. It must articulate the following information:

#### **1. Resource Benefits:**

- (A) Objectives - How does your project addresses specific priority objectives identified in the RFP or addresses potential threats and incorporate conservation strategies identified in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Strategic Action Plan (2013)? State what will be accomplished with the funding. Assessment, education or other non-on-the-ground projects proposals should clearly relate to habitat conservation outcomes and state how they address strategic priorities of the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership.
- (B) Assessment of needs – Describe the need for the project and how proposal relates to and supports broader landscape issues and larger initiatives (e.g. watershed plans, recovery plans, and multi-year projects, in addition to linkages to the FHP strategic plans). Lacking this information, a project may appear to be a localized treatment of symptoms that does not address root causes of habitat decline. Indicate if project is time sensitive.
- (C) Benefits – Describe benefits to specific species, short term and long term resource benefits for Mat-Su Salmon and their habitat and social and economic benefits to salmon communities.
- (D) Indicate number of impacted acres, miles of stream or shore line, or other quantifiable measures.

#### **2. Technical Merit**

- (E) Methodology – Clearly describe proposed methods and approach, and identify whether funds will be used for engineering/design work, for construction or other purposes. Project proposals that propose the use of potentially controversial techniques, such as bank hardening

by installing rip-rap, should explain why those techniques are appropriate in the specific situation.

- (F) Implementation - Proposed timeline, end date and a table containing schedule and description of milestones for the proposal that can be used to monitor project progress. Describe proposed public outreach activities.
- (G) Monitoring Plan - A description of monitoring activities used to compare pre and post project results. Use Appendix 12 of the Strategic Action Plan for guidelines if applicable. For projects that require maintenance, include a description of ownership and maintenance responsibility.
- (H) Applicant Qualifications - Name and describe the qualifications and experience of key personnel and lead organization that will be responsible for the project. Please describe qualifications of project advisors, consultants and other project partners (organizations and/or individuals). Also describe or give examples of past similar work that exemplifies your people or organization’s ability to carry out this project, including past experience with federal funds and their success in completing federally funded projects in the past.

**3. Budget table and narrative:**

The budget table should be a simple line item budget designed so that reviewers can understand how funds will be spent. Line items typically include salary, contractual, equipment/supplies, and direct or indirect costs.

<b>Budget Item (Examples Below<sup>1</sup>)</b>	<b>NFHP Requested \$</b>	<b>Match \$</b>	<b>Leveraged \$</b>	<b>Total Cost Share (Match + Leverage)</b>
<b>Salary</b>				
<b>Contractual</b>				
<b>Equipment/Supplies</b>				

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to SF424 series for applicable budget line items for your project <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/form-instructions/sf-424-instructions.html>

<b>Totals</b>				
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**TOTAL BUDGET SUMMARY:**

<b>Total Budget (NFHP Request + Match + Leverage):</b>
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(I) Budget Narrative - The budget narrative should state what entity will receive funding and implement the project (i.e. FWS or a partner or a combination). It should include discussion of each budget line item including direct cost items such as salaries, equipment, consultant services, subcontracts and travel, as well as cost sharing information (both match and leverage). Clearly identify whether the funds will be used for engineering/design work only, construction only, both, or some other activity. Applicants may cover new administrative costs, but cannot include administrative costs incurred before project award.

Narrative should discuss the cost of the project compared to similar conservation activities in that area. While habitat project costs vary widely, project descriptions should at least address how improvements to the quality and quantity of habitat are good investments of funds, using a quantitative and frugal approach where possible.

Multi-year projects should have a breakdown of tasks and costs by year.

(J) Cost-Share Ratio - Cost share can be composed of both Federal and non-Federal sources and in-kind contributions, salary or cash. Indicate ratio of cost-share to funds requested. This includes volunteer hours and leveraged funds.

**Additional information:**

Additional information might include photos, maps of project sites, design drawings, etc.

**(Attachment 3)**

**Criteria Used to Score FY2018 NFHP Projects for the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership**

The scoring criteria form is attached to inform project applicants on the criteria and weighting used to score projects by the Mat-Su Salmon Steering Committee.

**(Attachment 4)**

**Landowner Consent Template**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ as [one of] the owner[s] of the property (street, location) with the MSB Tax ID numbers ((( Blank ))); ((( Blank ))); and ((( Blank ))), I agree to participate in the project being proposed and/or consent to the ((( restoration project, inspection, appraisal, and/or survey))) of the property being offered for consideration under the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership. I agree to allow members of the (((Blank Organization))), NFHP Program representatives, State of Alaska Department of Fish and Game or their designated staff to inspect the property at any mutually agreeable time for the purposes of this proposal. I understand I shall be notified in advance of all inspection visits.

I also understand that the project being proposed may not happen if the application does not meet the needs or qualifications of the National Fish Habitat Plan and is subject to availability of funds and ranking priority.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_ By: \_\_\_\_\_