

FY2021 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 2020 according to guidelines developed by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership, and approved by May/June of 2021 contingent on funding release by the USFWS and the Board of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP). Project proponents are advised that although project selection may be announced in May/June of 2021, funding may not become available to their organization until as late as October 2021 and should consider this timeline when planning project implementation.

Project proposals are due via email by close of business on **October 23, 2020**.

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). Note the project summary is completed online at the link included on page 8.

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 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 (jessica.speed@tu.org). Click here to view [Partnership member list](#).

What types of projects may be funded?

Projects eligible for funding are those that focus on objectives listed within the Partnership's [2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan](#), with those addressing higher priority objectives receiving higher scores. The priority objectives for this year's RFP have been identified by the Steering Committee and guided by the latest science, including through a science data gap analysis, Partnership member survey and participant input at the Mat-Su Salmon symposium.

Note that this year, the Partnership Science and Data Committee has identified three priority data gaps it hopes will be addressed by proposals in the FY21 RFP process. Scoring criteria for FY21 objectives is as follows:

Points	Priority	Objectives that Address: *Find more detail in the Partnership’s 2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan, pg. 6
20	High	CS2. Alteration of Riparian Areas CS4. Culverts that Block Fish Passage CS5. Filling of Wetlands CS9. Loss or Alteration of Water Flow or Volume FY21 Priority Data Gaps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anadromous Waters Catalog Prioritization (CS1, Obj. 1.1) • Floodplain Mapping (CS2, Obj.2.1) • Identify and Prioritize Impacted Streams from ORV’s (CS11) *See priority data gap details below.
15	Medium	CS7. Aquatic Invasive Species CS6. Impervious Surfaces CS1. Overarching Applied Science Strategies Obj. 1.2 – Habitat Quality Obj. 1.3 Surface and Groundwater Studies Obj 1.4 – Water Quality Monitoring CS3. Climate Change
10	Low	CS8. Large-scale Resource Development CS10. Loss of Estuaries and Nearshore Habitats CS12. Wastewater Management

**“CS” refers to “Conservation Strategies, and “Obj.” refers to “Objective” found in the Partnership’s [2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan](#).

*Priority Data Gaps for FY21 RFP Process:

- 1) **Anadromous Waters Catalog: conduct a data gap analysis to assess and prioritize streams under 1,000 meters (approx. 3,000 ft.) remaining to be cataloged** with a goal to reach 50% of all streams below 1,000 meters in 5 years. (1,000 meters is the reasonable elevation that fish surveys can be completed with backpack electrofishing). This effort could build on GIS work completed by the Palmer Soil and Water Conservation District to run network tracing tasks on the NHD flowline network to identify those upstream ancestors of current AWC lines as potential streams to survey.

- 2) **Floodplain Mapping/Riparian Areas/Meander Belt Mapping: an accurate survey of flood plains, riparian areas and meander belts could help planners understand potential impacts from proposed developments.** Riparian areas are those transition areas between a stream bed and upland, including the floodplain of a stream/river. Meander belt is another term for the floodplain area of a stream and includes inactive channels that may be used in the future if the stream meanders to another path. Recommendation: focus activity on the identified 35 priority water bodies in the Mat-Su, and fastest growing areas (e.g. core area).
- 3) **Off Highway Vehicles (OHV) and Stream Crossings: identify and prioritize crossing sites for future improvement projects.** Fund future restoration work in the most-threatened priority fish habitat areas. This process would be similar to the fish passage program.

We encourage members to address these identified priority strategies and data gaps, which will receive additional points in the scoring process (see score sheet). The Steering Committee additionally encourages all projects to address climate change and applied science. 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.

- Trent Liebich (Phone: (907) 271-1798, email: Trent.Liebich@fws.gov)
- Jessica Speed (Phone: (907) 575-7818, email: jessica.speed@tu.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 \$70,000, with projects typically receiving about \$35,000. If you are submitting a higher dollar request, the Partnership Steering Committee recommends you articulate phased, or alternative options so that your project can still proceed if a lower funding amount is all that can be provided.

What is cost sharing and is it required?

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). Cost sharing is not required, however, proposals are encouraged to demonstrate 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 1:1, 2:1, or 3:1.

Proposals demonstrating cost-sharing 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, and non-Federal funding that can be financially valued, but is not counted in the match. It also includes in-kind contributions or cash. *Please note if any leveraged funds are from USFWS (not including the National Fish Habitat Partnership Program), and the dollar amount.

***Note:** This Partnership competes annually for National Fish Habitat Partnership funds that in-turn are dispersed for Mat-Su Basin salmon habitat related projects. Through this process we are rated on our ability to cost-share NFHP funds. Although you are encouraged to identify USFWS cost-sharing, note that we are NOT able to utilize USFWS cost-share funds in our competitive application process.

When are proposals due?

Proposals can be submitted from the date of this announcement to October 23, 2020, 5:00 pm Alaska time.

How do I apply for NFHP funding?

Email an electronic proposal to [Trent Liebich@fws.gov](mailto:Trent.Liebich@fws.gov) and “carbon copy” jessica.speed@tu.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 for Attachment 1 and 2. Attachment 1 is a project summary, and should be completed online by clicking on the link provided at the top of Attachment 1. 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). 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 often 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 and other outreach venues is required. In addition, annual progress and final reports submitted to USFWS must also be sent to the Partnership Coordinator at jessica.speed@tu.org to help the Partnership track progress toward goals in the Strategic Action Plan.

Are support letters required?

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. Any additional support letters from partners for non-easement or restoration projects are encouraged but not required.

What about project monitoring?

Post-project monitoring is highly recommended 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 carefully review the criteria and point system.**

How will proposals be selected?

FWS staff will receive applications and forward applications 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 2020. Top projects will be recommended for funding based on the total amount of project funding allocated for Mat-Su Salmon Partnership projects. The Steering Committee will create and honor a ranked project list when making funding decisions. However, projects will be categorized by project type: 1) on-the-ground conservation/restoration; 2) invasive species; 3) applied science; and, 4) outreach / partnership organization and, in the interest of maintaining a diversity of project types, the Steering Committee may fund top ranked projects by category type if deemed appropriate. 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.

When will final project selections be made and funding become available?

Applicants can expect to be notified the status of their project in May/June of 2021. Final cooperative agreements will be awarded once USFWS approval is completed and funding becomes available. Although project selection may occur as early as May 2021, it is possible that funding may not be available to recipients until October 2021. 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. 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

Complete Attachment 1 online at the following link: <https://form.jotform.com/202455946369062>

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): 			
<i>Project Description</i>			
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 address specific priority objectives and/or data gaps identified in the RFP – including climate change and applied science, or address potential threats and incorporate conservation strategies identified in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership 2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan. 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.

Budget Item (Examples Below¹)	NFHP Requested \$	Match \$	Leveraged \$ (*Please note amount of non-NFHP USFWS funds)	Total Cost Share (Match + Leverage)
Salary				
Contractual				
Equipment/Supplies				
Totals				

¹ 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>

TOTAL BUDGET SUMMARY:

Total Budget (NFHP Request + Match + Leverage):

(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 FY2021 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 Partnership 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: _____