

FY2022 NFHP Project Application and Selection Guide for the Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership

Summary:

The Mat-Su Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership (MSBSHP, www.matsusalmon.org) is announcing its annual request for fish habitat conservation project proposals. With the passage of the [America's Conservation \(ACE\) Act](#), through the [National Fish Habitat Partnership](#) (NFHP), there are new timelines and modifications to our request for proposals this year (RFP). Please read carefully.

This guidance includes information for preparing and submitting a project proposal through the Matanuska-Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership, a National Fish Habitat Partnership. The Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee is currently seeking project pre-proposals that address the conservation activities and priorities identified in the Partnership's [2019 Addendum to the Strategic Action Plan](#).

Project pre-proposals are due via online submission by 5pm (AKDT) on **May 3, 2021**.

Applicants need to prepare and submit a project pre-proposal request that describes their project and its benefits for fish habitat. **A complete application submission includes both a Project Description (Attachment 1 on page eight), and a Project Budget Worksheet (Attachment 2 page 10). Applications can be submitted online at <http://www.matsusalmon.org/what-we-do/types-of-projects/>.**

Pre-proposal documents will be reviewed and ranked by the Partnership Steering Committee in May 2021, then routed to the NFHP Board for their review and potential selection based on FY22 NFHP funding opportunities.

Note that the signing of the ACE Act in October of 2020 introduces some new requirements for this RFP, as well as a period of transition to the new National Fish Habitat Partnership model as outlined in the Act. Please note the following changes, as well as others noted in the guidelines:

- 1:1 non-federal match (cash or in-kind) is required for projects. The ACE Act is still being interpreted however, and applicants are still encouraged to submit strong projects that meet the goals of the MSBSHP even if they do not fully meet the 1:1 non-federal match target.
- This request is for pre-proposals. Full proposals will be requested from select applicants in summer/fall of 2021.

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](http://www.matsusalmon.org/sample-page/who-we-are/) 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. The Partnership Science and Data Committee has identified two priority data gaps it hopes will be addressed by proposals in the FY22 RFP process. Scoring criteria for FY22 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 FY22 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).

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 decisions will be made by the NFHP Board, with the final financial mechanisms to support selected projects still under development. It is highly recommended to speak with the contact listed below prior to proposal submittal to discuss projects for applicability, feasibility and general application assistance.

- Jessica Speed (Phone: (907) 575-7818, email: jessica.speed@tu.org)

What types of projects may NOT be funded?

Projects that fall under permit compliance, mitigation, and political advocacy are not eligible, in addition to activities from the below list. If they are 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. Funding for habitat projects through the National Fish Habitat Board is expected to be announced in the fall of 2021. Successful applicants will be notified after funding is allocated. Funding is expected to be made available to successful applicants in early 2022 and is typically spent within a one to two-year grant period.

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. A 1:1 (federal to nonfederal) cost share is strongly encouraged as project funds allocated under the ACE Act require a 1:1 non-federal match. The ACE Act is still being interpreted, and applicants are encouraged to still submit projects that meet the goals of the MSBSHP even if they do not fully meet the 1:1 federal: non-federal match target. Cost sharing may be increased by broadening the number and contributions of partners involved in a proposal. Proposals with higher non-federal match cost sharing may be scored at incrementally higher levels based on cost sharing amounts (e.g., 1:3, 1:2, 1:1, and no scoring in this category if no non-federal match is provided). Proposals demonstrating cost-sharing must include a distinction within their budget of funds that *match* and funds that *leverage* potential NFHP funds. Applicants are requested to list all sources of project match including federal sources,

Match: Match is non-federal funding or in-kind contributions. In-kind can be equipment, staff, supplies and volunteer time provided to the project if there are no federal ties to those funds. State agency funds can be used for the nonfederal match if labor and/or materials are not being charged to another federal grant. Once the grant funds are matched with nonfederal funds/in-kind, an unlimited amount of federal contributions to the project are allowed.

Leverage: Leverage refers to other contributions to a project and 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.

Special note: NFHP funding provided to a Tribe is not required to meet the 1:1 non-federal match requirement. In addition, we are receiving guidance that NFHP funding awarded is considered non-federal in that case and can be used in applying to other granting sources where the NFHP funding can be used as non-federal match. Contact the Partnership Coordinator for additional details, interpretations from the ACE Act are still underway. Also, 5% of the total NFHP funding appropriation is set aside specifically for Tribal led projects.

When are proposals due, and how do I apply for NFHP funding?

Apply online, by completing the Project Description (Attachment 1) and uploading a Project Budget Worksheet (Attachment 2) in the [application](#) found at www.matusalmon.org/what-we-do/types-of-projects/ **before 5:00 PM AKDT on May 3, 2021**. If your application is submitted successfully, you will receive a confirmation email. If you do not receive this email immediately after submission, contact jessica.speed@tu.org.

Is there a format for a NFHP proposal?

Yes. Please see Attachment 1- Project Description and Attachment 2- Project Budget Worksheet, for project formatting guidelines. You are advised to draft your responses in the Project Description worksheet in Attachment 1 and to copy/paste those responses into the [application form](#). Please do not exceed character counts. The Project Budget Worksheet should be filled out and uploaded as an attachment as well as any supporting documents such as proposal maps, drawings, photos and letters of support.

What project criteria are expected?

The following is a check list of project components necessary for applicants to address in order to be eligible to receive NFHP funding and include the most current interpretations from the ACE Act. These have been included and addressed in the Project Description template in **Attachment 1:**

- Capabilities and experience of project proponents to implement successfully the proposed project
- Fulfills a local or regional priority that is directly linked to the strategic plan of the Partnership;
- Addresses the national priorities established by the NFHP Board;
- Is supported by the findings of the habitat assessment of the Partnership and aligns or is
- compatible with other conservation plans;
- Identifies appropriate monitoring and evaluation measures and criteria;
- Provides a well-defined budget linked to deliverables and outcomes;

- Leverages other funds to implement the project (note 1:1 nonfederal match indicated above);
- Addresses the causes and processes behind the decline of fish or fish habitats;
- Includes an outreach or education component that includes the local or regional community.

Additionally, the ACE Act puts increased emphasis on sport fishing, recreational access, and the economic benefits to local communities received through NFHP funding projects; as a result, these items are included in the scoring matrix for proposed projects.

What is expected for outreach?

All projects require 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. In addition, annual progress and final reports submitted to NFHP are requested to 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 required and is scored as part of the selection process under 2. Technical Merit (G) found on the scoresheet. Applicants should review Appendix 12 of the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Strategic Action Plan for monitoring guidelines and discuss with the Partnership Coordinator 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 which fall under three main categories: Resource Benefits, Technical Merit, and Budget and Cost Sharing. **Please carefully review the criteria and point system** and note that there may be some modification to the scoring system used as a result of continued interpretation of the ACE Act and project requirements for NFHP funding.

How will proposals be selected?

Proposals shared through this outreach request will be elevated to the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee, scored relative to the Partnership's Strategic Action Plan, NFHP allocation methodology and ACE Act requirements (scoring spreadsheet included as Attachment 3) and routed to the NFHP Board for their review and potential selection based upon available FY22 funding opportunities. The Steering Committee expects to complete the selection process by May 17, 2021 and may reach out to project proposers for additional clarity in project submissions. NFHP Board selected projects are due under the ACE Act by July 1 annually. The Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee will request full proposals for funding from select applicants in the summer or fall of 2021.

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

Funding for local projects is subject to the NFHP program receiving federal funding in FY22. It is anticipated that for any approved projects, applicants can expect to be notified the status of their proposal in the fall of 2021. Funded projects will be required to submit a full proposal before receiving funding. Appropriations to selected projects are anticipated to be available in early 2022.

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

The NFHP Board is currently implementing processes for passing funding to selected NFHP projects. Full details for this may not be available until funding amounts are known. From previous processes it is recommended successful applicants obtain a DUNS number, as it may be required when completing award paperwork. Contact Dun and Bradstreet at the dedicated tollfree 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>).

The Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Coordinator will keep successful applicants updated as new information on the funding process through the NFHP Board is finalized.

Are there any reporting requirements?

Yes, there will be an annual progress and financial status reports with each project approved. Performance milestones will also be established for all projects. Specific reporting requirements will be described in the cooperative agreement with the selected applicant.

Attachment 1 – Project Description

Complete Attachment 1 online at the following <https://form.jotform.com/211026999825162>

Note: You can use the below template to pre-draft your responses to the RFP. Copy & paste these responses into the form at the above link.

Organization:	
Point of Contact:	
E-mail:	Phone Number:
Project Title (95 characters maximum):	
Funding Request:	Total non-federal match:
Total cost-share contributions (match and leverage):	Project Total:
Project Location <i>(please provide written location and one set of GPS coordinates in decimal format to 3 decimal places, if project will occur at multiple sites, only include the primary work location such as a main office or the primary work site):</i>	
Project Summary (1,250 characters maximum):	
<i>Project Description</i>	
Project Relevance to Fish & Fish Habitat (500 characters maximum):	
Resource Issue (Problem or Need) that Project Will Address (1000 characters maximum):	
Measurable Goals & Objectives of the Project (1000 characters maximum):	
Project Methods (1,000 characters maximum):	
Conservation Actions & Project Outcomes (1000 characters maximum):	
Outreach & Education (500 characters maximum):	

Monitoring plan comparing pre and post project results and activities that allow for effective evaluation of project success (500 characters maximum):

Additional Information Including Outcomes/Benefits to Fish, Including Species Benefited (1250 characters maximum):

Projects Linkage to a Specific Goal or Objective in the Partnership's Strategic Action Plan Conservation Strategies (500 characters maximum):

Key Project Personnel and their Relevant Experience:

Project Partners:

Is This Project Being Implemented by a Tribe or with Tribal Funds as a Source of Match?

Yes or No

Attachment 2 – Project Budget Worksheet

Complete the [Project Budget Worksheet](#), and then submit by uploading as an attachment at the bottom of the online Project Description form (Attachment 1)

Please use the budget worksheet provided to create your project budget. It includes a budget summary and space for narrative responses. Please be sure to complete all columns in the budget summary as the information is needed for review and is required by the NFHP Board when the MSBSHP submits its recommended list of projects for funding.

Additional information:

Additional information might include photos, maps of project sites, design drawings, letters of support etc. and can be uploaded as attachments.

Attachment 3 – Criteria Used to Score FY2022 NFHP Projects for the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership

The [scoring criteria](#) form can be found here and is attached in an excel spreadsheet form to inform project applicants on the criteria and weighting anticipated to score projects by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee. New information on interpretations from the ACE Act and requirements for NFHP funded projects are anticipated during the call for project concepts, as a result the scoring criteria may change.

Attachment 4 – Landowner Consent Template:

As relevant, landowner consent will be required with full proposals.

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: _____