

FY2015 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 conservation activities and priorities, as identified in the Strategic Action Plan (<http://www.matsusalmon.org/what-we-do/types-of-projects/>). The Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee is once again seeking project proposals and ideas from all partnership organizations. Project proposals will be reviewed and ranked during the fall according to guidelines developed by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership, and approved by the board of the National Fish Habitat Plan (NFHP) by mid-May. Those selected for funding will be announced after funding becomes available with the passage of the fiscal year 2015 Federal budget.

Project descriptions are due via email by close of business on **October 1, 2014**.

Participants need to prepare and submit proposals that describe their project and its benefits for fish habitat. A project description 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 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). Click here to view [Partnership member list](#).

What types of projects may be funded?

Habitat-based, cost-shared 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](#). It is highly recommended to contact the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) contacts below, prior to proposal submittal and discuss projects for applicability and feasibility.

- Bill Rice (Phone: (907) 271-1798, email: william_rice@fws.gov.)
- Doug McBride (Phone: (907) 271-2871, email: doug_mcbride@fws.gov),

What types of projects may NOT be funded?

Funding for projects comes from the FWS. Funds appropriated to the FWS for implementation of NFHP activities may NOT be expended on: 1) Pre-award costs associated with preliminary design, surveys, and appraisals; 2) Purchase of interests in real property or land use incentive payments to landowners; 3) Operation and maintenance of facilities or buildings; 4) Actions required by existing regulatory programs, except that funds may support activities under voluntary agreements that exceed regulatory requirements for conserving habitats; 5) Research studies (fish habitat monitoring and assessment projects can be funded as they are not considered research); and 6) Incentive payments. If any of these activities is integral to a project, funds from other sources may be used to support the activities, and those funds may qualify as matching funds.

Must a proposal address Climate Change?

Projects that promote adaptation to climate change are encouraged at the national level. A portion of available funds will be directed to projects that implement goals and objectives for adaptation identified in the FWS's strategic plan for responding to climate change (<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.

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 financial value of what is matched or leveraged for the proposal; can be composed of both Federal and non-Federal sources; and can be in-kind contributions, salary or cash. 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.

Leverage: Leverage includes Federal funding, Federal in-kind contributions, or other project support that can be financially valued but cannot be match.

What are the cost sharing requirements for a proposal?

Proposals are encouraged to demonstrate cost sharing. Cost sharing may be increased by broadening the scope of partners involved in a proposal. Proposals with cost sharing will be scored at incrementally higher levels based on cost sharing at 1:1, 2:1, or 3:1.

When are proposals due?

Proposals can be submitted from the date of this announcement to October 1, 2014, 5:00 pm Alaska time.

How do I apply for NFHP funding?

Email an electronic proposal to elizabeth_benolkin@fws.gov and “carbon copy” doug_mcbride@fws.gov and william_rice@fws.gov on or before the deadline. Ensure you receive confirmation of receipt of your proposal by the deadline.

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 ranking criteria (Attachment 3). The Steering Committee expects to complete the selection process in December 2014. Top projects will be recommended for funding based on the total amount of project funding allocated for Mat-Su Salmon Projects. A prioritized list of proposals is submitted to a national review board for their review and endorsement and then sent to the FWS Director for final approval, a process which currently ends in May.

When will project selections be made?

Applicants will be informed in May 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 2011-2013, funds only became available in late June or July. For 2015, expect to be informed about proposal funding in mid-May with a similar timeframe for funding availability. It is highly recommended that this timing is considered when planning project implementation.

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. 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 be submitted as attachments and not count as part of the 2-page summary.

What criteria are used to score proposals?

We will use the scoring criteria listed in Attachment 3 to evaluate proposals. Please note **there have been updates to the scoring criteria from 2014 based on changes to the national program. Please carefully review the criteria and point system.**

Note that support letters from project partners are encouraged and are part of the scoring criteria. Landowner support letter(s) are required for any easement or restoration activity proposed. Should your project get 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.

Additionally, post-project monitoring is highly encouraged and applicant should review Appendix 12 of the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Strategic Action Plan for monitoring guidelines as well as discuss with FWS contacts if there are any questions.

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 grant 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) 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).

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

Organization and Contact Person: E-mail: _____ Phone Number: _____ Project Title (95 characters maximum): _____		
Funding Request: _____	Match or In-kind: _____	Project Total: _____
Project Location: _____		
Proposed Accomplishment Summary (500 characters maximum): 		
<i>Project Description</i>		
The importance to the resource (350 characters maximum): 		
The resource issue (problem or need) and the specific cause of the issue (350 characters maximum): 		
The objective of the project with reference to the issue (350 characters maximum): 		
The method applied to accomplish the objective (350 characters maximum): 		
Additional information, including outcomes/benefits to salmon (1250 characters maximum): 		
Projects linkage to the Strategic Action Plan Conservation Strategies: 		

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:

NFHP funds requested:

Cost Sharing provided:

Project point of contact: Organization name, contact name, title, phone number(s), and e-mail address.

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) Assessment of needs – describe how proposal relates to and support 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.
- (2) Objectives with reference to the resource issue(s) addressed by the proposal.
- (3) Proposed timeline, end date and a table containing schedule and description of milestones for the proposal that can be used to monitor project progress.
- (4) Methodology – clearly describe proposed methods and approach, and identify whether funds will be used for engineering/design work, for construction, or both. 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.
- (5) Geographic location (maps optional but recommended, including land ownership).
- (6) Number of impacted acres, miles of stream or shore line, or other quantified measure.
- (7) Species / populations benefited.
- (8) Other partners involved in project proposal.
- (9) Performance measures & outcomes – identification of clear, obtainable, and quantifiable goals and performance measures that will achieve the management goals and objectives of the Strategic Action Plan. State what will be accomplished within 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.

- (10) A description of monitoring activities used to compare pre and post project success using Appendix 12 of the Strategic Action Plan.

Applicant Qualifications

Name and describe the qualifications and experience of the lead organization and key positions that will be responsible for the project. Please describe qualifications of project advisors, consultants and other project partners (organizations and/or individuals).

Describe or give examples of past similar work that exemplifies your 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.

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. Typical line items typically include salary, contractual, equipment/supplies, and indirect costs.

Budget Item	NFHP Requested \$	Match \$	Leveraged \$	Total Cost Share (Match + Leverage)
Totals				

TOTAL BUDGET SUMMARY:

Total Budget (NFHP Request + Match + Leverage):
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The budget narrative will clearly 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 they cannot include administrative costs incurred before project award.

Narratives 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 the quality and quantity of habitat improved is a good investment of funds, using a quantitative approach where possible.

Additional information:

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

(Attachment 3)

Criteria Used to Score 2015 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.

Criteria Used to Score FY2015 NFHP Project Proposals for the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership

Project Title:

Reviewer:

Eligibility Screening - Must be able to answer "yes" to each of the following questions:	Y/N
Does proposal address one or more of the strategies identified in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership's Strategic Action Plan?	
Is there a monitoring plan following Partnership guidelines?	
If multi-annual, is there a breakdown of tasks and budget by year?	
If applicable, the proposal includes landowner consent?	

Points (Itemized)	Scoring Guidance	Reviewers Score	Comment
1. Resource Benefits: How well the proposed approach serves to protect, restore, or enhance Matanuska-Susitna fish habitats and fish species as specified in the Strategic Action Plan. (40 points)			
a) Proposal focuses directly on anadromous Mat-Su-salmon and their habitat	10=Yes; 0=No	0	
b) Proposal addresses one or more potential threats as identified in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership strategic plan (2013).	10 = very likely, 8 = somewhat likely, 4 = somewhat possible, 0=not likely		
c) Proposal incorporates conservation strategies identified in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership strategic action plan.	10=clearly identified and described, 8=moderate, 1=not well described or 0= strategies not incorporated		
d) Proposal accurately describes how it provides short and long-term benefits for Mat-Su salmon and/or their habitat. For projects that require maintenance, there is a description of ownership and maintenance responsibility.	10=clearly identified and described, 8=moderate, 1=not well described or 0= strategies not incorporated		
2. Performance Measures (30 points)			
e) Proposal describes on-the-ground conservation or restoration of land and identifies the numbers of stream miles opened or restored, acres of stream or wetland protected (or other relevant measurable outcome). OR Proposal describes outreach or assessment and identifies relevant measurable outcomes from the project and how they inform conservation or restoration actions.		0	
f) Proposal describes objectives and benefits to target species, social benefits, and/or economic benefits.			
g) Proposal includes monitoring plan that follows the guidance in the strategic action plan (2013). Assessment and outreach projects do not have guidance yet and rely on the proposer for clearly articulated monitoring plan.			
3. Budget and Cost Sharing (20 points)			
h) Describe budget, all budget items are justified in-the proposal objectives, and multiannual proposals have a breakdown of tasks by year.		0	
i) The proposal documents non-federal and/or federal support with matching or leveraged funds/ in-kind services. Proposal indicates the cost-share ratio.	Points for each cost-share ratio are: 10 points for ≥3:1; 8≥2:1; 6≥1:1; 2≤1:1, 0=No match		
4. Applicant Qualifications (10 points)			
j) Key organizations and personnel are described and have capabilities to complete proposal.		0	
k) Proposal provides examples of applicant's relevant experience conducting similar projects.			
Total Possible		Reviewers Score	
Total	100	0	

(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: _____