

Fishers & Farmers Partnership Seeks Aquatic Habitat Project Proposals for 2023 funding cycle

Deadline February 1, 2022

Fishers & Farmers Partnership (FFP) for the Upper Mississippi River Basin, a fish habitat partnership, is seeking project proposals to benefit aquatic habitat in Mississippi River basin streams. Federal funding may be available under the National Fish Habitat Partnership through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to fund top ranked proposals.

About the Program:

[Fishers & Farmers Partnership for the Upper Mississippi River Basin](#) is a self-directed group of non-governmental agricultural and conservation organizations, tribal organizations and state and federal agencies united to add value to farms while protecting, restoring, and enhancing the 30,700 miles of streams and rivers of the Upper Mississippi River Basin. It is a partnership of the [National Fish Habitat Partnership](#).

We Support the National Fish Habitat Partnership's Goals:

- Protect & maintain intact and healthy aquatic systems
- Prevent further degradation of fish habitats
- Reverse declines in quality & quantity of aquatic habitats to improve overall health of fish/aquatic species
- Increase quality & quantity of fish habitat that support a broad natural diversity of fish/aquatic species

Fishers & Farmers Partnership's Goals:

- Engage Farmers & Ranchers
- Support Fish Habitat Conservation Projects
- Continue Development of Long-Term Basin Scale Strategies
- Strengthen Organization for Long-Term Action

Fishers and Farmers Partnership's Vision:

The Partnership's vision of the future is one in which landowners work together with conservationists and scientists to address the needs of their own farms, local streams, and the fishes of the basin. Lessons learned are shared with neighbors, participating organizations, and others outside of the basin. Fish populations and habitats are monitored at project sites and downstream. The Partnership helps landowners showcase successful practices to neighbors and others. With a focus on mutual respect, dialog is cultivated between agricultural and environmental organizations throughout the Upper Mississippi River Basin. This leads to better use of resources, less duplication of effort, and measurable progress toward common goals.

Our Mission:

The mission of the Fishers & Farmers Partnership is to support locally-led conservation projects that add value to farms while restoring aquatic habitat and native fish populations.

Priorities for FFP:

- Increase native fish/mussel populations – Focal fish/mussel species: smallmouth bass, Topeka shiner, American brook lamprey, blacknose dace, black redhorse, blackside darter, brook/brown trout, channel catfish, hornyhead chub, southern redbelly dace, Higgins' eye mussel, pink mucket, scaleshell, spectaclecase
- Improve in-stream habitat by reducing sedimentation, phosphorus and nitrogen runoff
- Work with farmers/landowners to protect/maintain healthy aquatic systems, or prevent further degradation by promoting best management practices across the landscape
- Increase landowner engagement/farmer-led committees that drive conservation
- Improve floodplain habitat, enhance flow regimes, improve connectivity
- Monitor effectiveness of conservation projects, then share our stories through outreach

Funding Amount:

Funding floor \$15,000
FFP receives approximately
\$100,000-\$230,000 split
among 3-5 projects.

Cost sharing by partners:

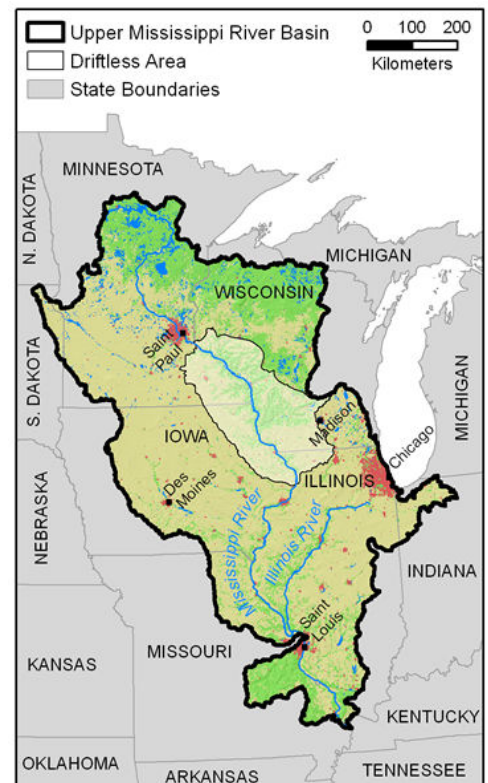
USFWS requires at least a 1:1 non-Federal cost share, and a 3:1 match will improve chances of funding. Cost share/matched funding must not be matched to another federal grant. Match may be in-kind services and can include planning, design, monitoring, farmer's time with project maintenance, field day planning, etc.

Applicant Eligibility:

Applicants can be tribal, federal, state, county, and non-government organizations in either natural resources or agriculture with the ultimate goal of adding value to farms while restoring aquatic habitat and native fish populations. Managers and supervisors responsible for implementing fish habitat projects must document compliance with all applicable Federal laws and regulations (e.g. National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Rivers and Harbors Act). Fish habitat projects must also comply with any applicable State, local and tribal laws and regulations that do not conflict with, or are not preempted by, Federal laws and regulations. The ACE Act included special considerations for Tribes that we are still awaiting interpretation of. Please contact FFP's Coordinator if you have a project on Tribal land.

Eligible expenditures. Expenditures of NFHP funds are appropriate for the following actions/activities:

- (a) Time spent for project planning, directing project activities (earthwork, fence installation), site assessments, travel to and from project, and project oversight.
- (b) Equipment (monitoring equipment, not farming equipment).
- (c) Earthwork (contracts for earth moving, planting, structure installation, other site preparation), materials (rock, gravel, plants and planting supplies, materials to construct habitat structures).
- (d) Short-term monitoring/evaluation. Funds may be used for pre and post project monitoring of NFHP projects to evaluate biological and/or physical response to project activities.
- (e) Outreach to advance conservation. Engaging farmers/landowners in farmer-led efforts, workshops/training. Each project must include an outreach/education component.
- (f) *The ACE Act allows a state, local government, or other non-federal entity to receive NFHP funds for the acquisition of real property from willing sellers if the acquisition ensures public access for fish and wildlife-dependent recreation or contributes a scientifically based, direct enhancement to the health of fish and fish populations as determined by the NFHP Board. All real property acquisition projects funded with NFHP funds must be approved by the state agency in the state in which the project is occurring. Please contact FFP's Coordinator if you have a project request that includes real property acquisition.



Ineligible expenditures. The following activities are **not** eligible for NFHP funding:

- (a) Actions required by existing Federal or State regulatory programs. Fish habitat expenditures shall be in addition to, not in lieu of, other expenditures authorized or required from other entities under other agreements or provisions of law.
- (b) Land use incentive payments to landowners.
- (c) Pre-award costs such as preliminary design, surveys, and appraisals.
- (d) Operation, maintenance of facilities, structures, other construction.

General Requirements:

Project Duration: Work is to be completed within 18 months
Terms of Funding: Funding must be spent within 24 months
Priority habitat: Outside Driftless Area (DA), but DA projects will be considered

*Projects must include monitoring, or evaluation measures and an outreach/education component.

Application Method/Submittal:

Project Proposals required to be submitted to: Heidi_Keuler@fws.gov

Timeline:

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|-------------------|--|
| Nov 2021 | Develop project proposals for National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) funding consideration |
| Feb 1 2022 | Application/Proposal Deadline |
| Feb/Mar 2022 | Projects will be evaluated/ranked by FFP Steering Committee |
| Mar 2022 | FFP provides priority project list to NFHP Board |
| Apr/Jun 2022 | NFHP Board reviews projects |
| Jul/Sep 2022 | Department of Interior Review |
| Jan 2023 | Announcement of awards to recipients |
| Apr/May 2023 | Agreements/Funding awarded |

Ranking Criteria: (See FFP Strategic Plan)

Measurable Goals/Priorities: FWS, NFHP, FFP, Partners
State Wildlife Action Plans
Fish species (see list), priority areas – watersheds, COAs, etc.
Habitat issues: connectivity, climate change, sediment/nutrients
Addresses root cause of problem within watershed
Conservation actions produce desired outcomes, goals, obj.
Project follows design, collaborates with partners in watershed
Outlines anticipated benefits to larger restoration focus area
Explains pre/post project evaluation/monitoring (**required**)
Life expectancy – goals sustainable
Improves farms and fish habitat
Leverages maximum matching funds, cost-sharing
Reasonable budget
Has attended a [Watershed Leaders Network Workshop](#)

Priority Watersheds

Seven Mile Creek – Minnesota River, MN
Cannon River Watershed, MN
Root River, MN
Bad Axe, WI
Kickapoo River, WI
Red Cedar, WI
Boone Watershed, IA
Rock Creek, IA
Galena River Watershed, IL
Indian Creek – Vermilion River, IL
Hutchins Creek, IL
Bourbeuse-Meramec, MO
Peno Creek – Salt River, MO
Spring Creek – Chariton River, MO
(These watersheds receive priority, but other watersheds will be considered)

Please address questions to:

Heidi Keuler
US Fish and Wildlife Service
555 Lester Avenue
Onalaska, WI 54650
608-783-8417



The National Fish Habitat Partnership's mission is to protect, restore, and enhance the nation's fish and aquatic communities through partnerships that foster fish habitat conservation and improve the quality of life for the American people.