

# 2014 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 ideas from all partnership organizations. Project descriptions are due via email by close of business on September 6, 2013. Projects will be ranked by the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership during the fall, and reviewed and approved by the board of the National Fish Habitat Plan (NFHP) in the winter. Those selected for funding will be announced after funding becomes available with the passage of the fiscal year 2014 Federal budget.

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).

## **NFHP Frequently Asked Questions**

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

Any individuals or organization can apply who have 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 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, 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. A strong focus of the Partnership is on-the-ground restoration projects. It is highly recommended to contact US Fish and Wildlife Service, prior to proposal submittal and discuss projects for applicability and feasibility.

### **Contact:**

Bill Rice (Phone: (907) 271-1798, email: [william\\_rice@fws.gov](mailto:william_rice@fws.gov).)

or Libby Benolkin (Phone: (907) 271-2718, email: [elizabeth\\_benolkin@fws.gov](mailto:elizabeth_benolkin@fws.gov)),

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

Funding for projects comes from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). Funds appropriated to the Service 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 Service's strategic plan for responding to climate change (<http://www.fws.gov/home/climatechange/strategy.html>).

Adaptation refers to planned management actions we will take to help reduce the impacts of climate change on fish, wildlife, and their habitats. Our adaptive response to climate change will involve strategic conservation of habitats within sustainable landscapes. This approach to achieving our landscape conservation objectives is called "Strategic Habitat Conservation."

### ***What is Required 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 writeup in the local paper. All funded projects are also expected to present results through a presentation or poster at the annual Mat-Su Science 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 \$15,000 to \$50,000.

### ***Are there cost sharing requirements for a proposal?***

We try to secure at least 50 percent of total project costs from partners. This applies to overall funds allocated to a Service Region (the state of Alaska in our case) and does not need to be achieved on every project. Matches may be from both Federal and non-Federal sources and can

be in-kind contributions or cash. Project partners are encouraged to increase matching contributions by broadening the scope of partners involved in individual projects.

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

Proposals can be submitted from the date of this announcement to September 6, 2013, 5:00 pm.

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

Email an electronic proposal to [elizabeth\\_benolkin@fws.gov](mailto:elizabeth_benolkin@fws.gov) and “carbon copy” [david\\_wigglesworth@fws.gov](mailto:david_wigglesworth@fws.gov) and [william\\_rice@fws.gov](mailto:william_rice@fws.gov) on or before September 6, 2013. Ensure you receive confirmation of receipt of your proposal before the deadline.

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

The Steering committee expects to complete the selection process in October 2013. Projects must then be reviewed and approved by a national review board and the Service’s Director, a process which typically happens in the first or second quarter of the year. Finally, funding will become available soon after the Interior Department budget has been signed by the President. This process can be lengthy. For example, in 2011-2013, funds only became available in late June or July. It is highly recommended that this timing is considered when planning a project.

### ***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 team, 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 pages of the summary.

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

We will use the criteria listed in the scorecard in Attachment 3 to evaluate proposals. Note that partners support letters are encouraged in the scoring criteria. Landowner support letter(s) are required for any easement or restoration activity proposed. Should your project get selected for funding and requires landowner approval, a signed landowner consent letter is required for on-the-ground restoration projects (template as Attachment 4) as well as a separate list of partners and their contact information.

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

The Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Steering Committee members will rank the projects using the ranking criteria (Attachment 3). Top projects will be recommended for funding. A national

panel will review proposals and provide recommendations to the National NFHP Board and the Service's Director for funding. The Director will make the final determination for approval.

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

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

Funding recipients are required to obtain a DUNS number when completing grant paperwork before returning it to the Service 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 Service 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 Service and indicate your ASAP ID. The form is available at: [www.fws.gov/fbms](http://www.fws.gov/fbms). After the Service verifies your enrollment, you will enter your bank account information into ASAP. When completed, your Service 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):   		
<b><i>Project Description</i></b>		
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 fish (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:**

**Match funds or in-kind services provided:**

**Project point of contact:** Organization, 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 projects relate 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 project.
  - (3) Proposed timeline.
  - (4) Methodology – clearly describe proposed methods and approach, and identify whether funds will be used for engineering/design work, for construction, or both. Projects 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.
  - (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 should clearly relate to habitat conservation outcomes, and state how they address strategic priorities of the Partnership.

**Applicant Qualifications**

Name and describe the qualifications of the key personnel that will be responsible for the project.

Describe or give examples of past similar work that exemplifies your organizations ability to carry out this project.

**Budget table and narrative:**

The budget table should be a simple line item budget designed so that reviewers can understand how funds are proposed to be spent. Typical line items typically include salary, contractual, equipment/supplies, and indirect costs.

<b>Description of Service</b>	<b>Match Dollars</b>	<b>NFHP Dollars</b>

**TOTAL BUDGET SUMMARY:**

<b>Total Budget:</b>	<b>Match:</b>	<b>NFHP Funds:</b>
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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 direct cost items such as salaries, equipment, consultant services, subcontracts and travel, as well as project matching or cost sharing information. Clearly identify whether the funds will be used for engineering/design work only, construction only, or both. Applicants may cover new administrative costs, but they cannot include administrative costs incurred before project approval.

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 2014 NFHP Projects for the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership**

This scorecard is attached to inform project proposers on the criteria and weighting used to score projects by the Steering Committee.



Criteria Used to Score 2014 NFHP Projects for the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership

Project Title:

Reviewer:

<b>Elegibility Screening - Must be able to answer "yes" to each of the following questions:</b>	<b>Y/N</b>
Does Project address one or more of the strategies identified in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership's Strategic Action Plan?	
If applicable, the proposal includes landowner consent?	

	Points (total/itemized)	Scoring Guidance	Reviewers Score	Comment
<b>Resource Benefits: <i>How well the project approach serves to protect, restore, or enhance Matanuska-Susitna fish habitats and fish species as specified in the Strategic Action Plan.</i></b>	<b>30</b>			
Project clearly addresses one or more potential threats and/or focal issues as identified in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership strategic plan.	6	6 = very likely, 3 = somewhat likely, 6 1 = somewhat possible, 0=not likely		
Project is likely to provide long-term benefits for Mat-Su conservation targets and species. For projects that require maintenance there is a description of ownership and maintenance responsibility.	6	6=clearly identified and described, 3=moderate, 1=not well described		
Project incorporates conservation strategies identified in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership strategic action plan, contributing to on the ground restoration or conservation.	6	6 or 0= strategies not incorporated		
Project addresses a root cause of degradation, rather than symptoms and restores natural processes	6			
Project clearly defines conservation benefits as described in the Mat-Su Salmon Partnership Strategic plan?	6			
<b>Performance Measures</b>	<b>20</b>			
Clear stated monitoring plan or design plans (if applicable) will be able to document quantifiable benefits	5			
Project includes a monitoring plan to collect information critical to specific strategic actions identified in the Mat-Su strategic action plan.	5			
Project clearly describes the numbers of stream miles opened or restored, acres stream or wetland protected (or other relevant measurable outcome).	5			
Project describes the benefits to target species, social benefits, and/or economic benefits.	5			
<b>Budget and Cost Sharing</b>	<b>20</b>			
Clearly described budget, all budget items are justified in relation to the program objectives and clearly explained	7			
The proposed project leverages federal or non-federal support with matching funds or in-kind services. Match indicates community support.	7			
Cost effectiveness, most of the project funds go towards on the ground application.	6			

<b>Application Qualifications</b>	<b>10</b>	
Key personnel are described and have capabilities/experience to complete what is proposed.	4	
Proposal clearly describes the project and its merits in terms of the MSBSHP strategic action plan.	2	
Technical merit & objectives seem sound, realistic, achievable.	2	
Proposal provides examples of applicants relevant experience conducting similar projects.	2	

<b>Partner Support/Permissions</b>	<b>20</b>	
Project has multiple and diverse partners working in collaboration, including important local/regional partners and landowners (if applicable).	8 = multiple letters of support from partners, 5 = letter of support from partner and/or multiple partner application, 2= relevant partners listed but no letters, 0 = no apparent support from partners	
Necessary permits are listed with schedule to obtain them to ensure timely execution of the project.	6	
The proposal describes how the community will be involved through outreach and/or education	6	

	Total Possible	Reviewers Score
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>

**Note: this score sheet and criteria incorporates NFHP *Minimum Benchmarks Guidance for Project Selection*, *National Conservation Strategies*, and *Evaluating Fish Habitat Partnership Performance* 2013 documents.**

**(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: \_\_\_\_\_