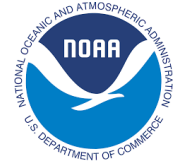


Increasing Recreational Fisheries Engagement through the Fish Habitat Partnerships (FY26) Call for Proposals



The NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation and Recreational Fisheries Initiative are seeking to identify and support projects within coastal Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) that protect or restore habitat **AND** engage recreational fishing partners.

Background: The goals of this funding opportunity is to enhance collaboration with recreational fishing partners and to protect or restore habitat. Healthy habitat is foundational to our Nation’s fisheries and recreation. [The National Fish Habitat Partnership](#) (NFHP) and individual FHPs provide strategic opportunities to advance priority habitat conservation projects while engaging recreational fishing partners. NFHP aims 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. An existing network of [20 Fish Habitat Partnerships](#) all across the nation develops and implements on-the ground projects at local and regional scales. There are 10 Fish Habitat Partnerships in coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats:

Fish Habitat Partnership	Coordinator Name	Coordinator Email
Atlantic Coastal Fish Habitat Partnership	Simen Kaalstad	skaalstad@asmfc.org
Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership	Todd Ewing	todd@southeastaquatics.net
California Fish Passage Forum	Holly Steindorf	hsteindorf@nrccorp.com
Pacific Lamprey Conservation Initiative	Grace Adams	gadams@nrccorp.com
Pacific Marine and Estuarine Partnership	Joan Drinkwin	jdrinkwin@nrccorp.com
Hawaii Fish Habitat Partnership	Gordon Smith	HawaiiFHPCoordinator@pm.me
Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership	Debbie Hart	coordinator@sealaskafishhabitat.org
Southwest Alaska Salmon Habitat Partnership	Tim Troll	nmwlandtrust@hotmail.com
Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership	Trent Dodson	fishhabitat@kenaiwatershed.org
Matanuska Susitna Basin Salmon Habitat Partnership	Jessica Speed	jessica.speed@tu.org
Western Native Trout Initiative	Jon Sjoberg	WNTI.Coordinator@wafwa.org
Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture	Lori Maloney	lori.maloney@canaanvi.org

Funding Available per Project: Funding will be used to support several FHP projects (up to ~\$75,000 per project).

Time Frame: Projects may take place over the course of more than one year. Please include a project timeline with your application.

Who Can Apply: Any coastal FHP or their partner(s) is eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Organizations that are not already partners in a coastal FHP are also welcome to apply, provided that they coordinate with the relevant FHP coordinator on their application.

Program Priorities:

Projects must have all of the following:

1. Be located in **and** coordinated with a Fish Habitat Partnership
2. Actively engage recreational fishing partners in habitat protection or restoration. This may include, but is not limited to:
 - a. Direct participation of recreational fishing partners in FHP habitat projects, including research, monitoring, and on-the-ground restoration
 - b. Education and outreach with, by, or for recreational fishing partners on habitat conservation topics
 - c. Hosting of an event focused on habitat and recreational fishing opportunity that engages recreational fishing partners
3. Focus on habitat restoration or protection (*see FAQ for more details*) for recreationally important saltwater or diadromous species
4. Be achievable within the provided timeline and budget and provide project updates to NOAA when requested

Priority will be given to projects that

1. Demonstrate coordination between an FHP and recreational fishing partners
2. Have the potential to develop longer-term relationships with recreational fishing community/partners
3. Result in improved fish habitat availability, quality, or understanding, particularly for species with high recreational or socioeconomic significance

Call for Proposals: Please send any project proposals (up to 6 pages, not including budget) to alex.mcowen@noaa.gov and russell.dunn@noaa.gov and copy your coastal FHP coordinator (*listed above*) by Wednesday, **May 20, 2026**.

Include the following sections in your proposal:

- Project title
- Project location and FHP
- Brief project description
- Explanation of how the project engages recreational fishing partners
- Project timeline
- Project budget (broken down into cost categories)

Evaluation Criteria

Reviewers will assign scores to applications ranging from 0-100 based on the following evaluation criteria. We encourage applicants to make explicit connections to the evaluation criterion in their applications.

Relevance to program goals (40 points)

- Is the project located in **and** coordinated with a Fish Habitat Partnership?
- Are recreational fishing partners actively engaged?
- Does the project focus on habitat conservation, restoration, or protection for recreationally important saltwater or diadromous species?
- Will the project result in improved fish habitat availability, quality, or understanding for future restoration or protection?

Clear objectives and activities (20 points)

- Are the project activities aligned with the objectives of the proposed project?
- Are the project objectives and activities clearly described?
- Is there information about how project success will be evaluated?

Collaboration (20 points)

- Does the project demonstrate coordination with the relevant FHP and recreational fishing partners?
- Does the project have the potential to build long-term relationships with recreational fishing partners?

Budget (20 points)

- Is the project budget clear and specific as to how funds will be spent?
- Is a large proportion of funds (relative to salaries, overhead, etc.) directed toward the implementation of on-the-ground habitat restoration, protection, or engagement activities?
- Is the budget reasonable and is the project achievable within the provided budget and timeline?

Frequently Asked Questions

What types of projects or activities are considered “habitat restoration or protection”?

Habitat restoration and/or protection takes many forms depending on the geography and the fish species of focus. This funding opportunity will support projects that directly result in habitat restoration or protection (e.g., oyster reef, living shoreline, or woody debris installation, etc.) for recreationally important fish species **or** indirectly result in protection (e.g., habitat mapping for protection, research, etc.). Projects that are purely research focused (i.e., without a direct connection to restoration or protection) are not best suited for this funding opportunity.

Who can submit proposals?

Any coastal FHP or its partner is eligible to apply for this funding opportunity. Organizations that are not already partners in a coastal FHP are also welcome to apply, provided that they coordinate with the relevant FHP coordinator on their application. A brief acknowledgement of support from the corresponding FHP coordinator can help to demonstrate this coordination.

How will funds be distributed? Does there need to be a funding mechanism already in place for the project?

Typically, the interstate fisheries commissions are simple mechanisms NOAA Fisheries can utilize to disburse money. NOAA Fisheries has existing agreements with every commission. Proposals do not need to budget for any overhead associated with the funding mechanism (e.g., transfer through a commission). FHPs and partners do not need to have a funding mechanism in place to submit a proposal. If there is not a funding mechanism identified in the proposal, we will work to identify whether a mechanism exists.

Can funds be distributed through the non-profit arm of NFHP (The National Fish Habitat Fund) to get to the FHP to implement the project?

We are not able to move money through the non-profit arm of NFHP (The National Fish Habitat Fund).

Over what time frame can the projects take place?

The funding opportunity is for the FY26 fiscal year. However, projects can take place over the course of more than one year. Please include a project timeline with your application.

Can projects focus on diadromous species?

Yes, projects can focus on diadromous species. Priority may be given to projects that focus on federally-managed species (which include several diadromous species).

What are the reporting requirements?

The NOAA Fisheries Office of Habitat Conservation will ask for brief project updates and photos, and will write a web story about the funded projects when selected and approximately a year later to showcase progress. Historically, funds have been transferred to FHP partners through the interstate fisheries commissions, which may have their own reporting requirements for funded projects.