**FY2020 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership**

**Deadline for Proposal Submission: August 15, 2020**

**Introduction:** The Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership (RFHP) is pleased to request proposals for partial funding of reservoir fisheries habitat enhancement projects. The RFHP is a national partnership established to promote and facilitate the conservation of habitat for fish and other aquatic species in reservoir systems through collaborative actions that contribute to:

* *Protect, restore and enhance fish habitat in reservoir systems to support productive fisheries and healthy aquatic ecosystems including techniques to account for climate change effects on reservoir fisheries habitat;*
* *Continue to develop/refine the science behind reservoir habitat conservation/restoration, including development and communication of Best Management Practices;*
* *Manage reservoir systems to provide, protect and enrich quality of life for the American people;*
* *Develop and foster partnerships that implement landscape-scale approaches to the conservation of fish habitat in reservoir systems;*
* *Develop and sustain institutional arrangements and sources of funding to support the long-term conservation of fish habitat in reservoir systems;*
* *Support education and outreach initiatives that advance public awareness and understanding of the value of healthy reservoir systems.*

Proposed projects can be focused on habitat issues in the reservoir proper and/or in watersheds above the reservoir and/or tailwaters below.

**Eligible applicants include:** state and federal governmental agencies; non-governmental organizations (e.g., sportsman’s groups, community associations, watershed user groups, cooperatives, civic groups), municipalities, universities, schools, state and tribal governments. Projects must be on public reservoirs. Projects on reservoirs with no or limited public access are not eligible. **Proposals must include “on-the-ground” habitat restoration objectives. Research proposals are not acceptable.**

**Project Duration:** Work conducted for the project is to be completed within 12-18 months of contract approval. Projects should be designed to begin in spring 2021; however funding from RFHP is likely not going to be available until summer to early fall 2021. Actual project start date will be the date funding documents are signed.

**Funding:** Approximately **$150,000-$200,000** is available for projects. RFHP anticipates funding 4-6 projects @ $10,000-$40,000 each. Given the limited amount of funding available at this time, RFHP grants should be considered as a partial funding source for projects with multiple funding sources and partners. Grants must have a minimum of **1:1 non-federal contributions**, which may be in cash, time, goods, or other services. All contributions (cash and/or in-kind) must be acquired during the project period. Special consideration will be given to projects with more than the minimum match. Eligible costs will be paid for work done no earlier than contract approval. Grant funds may **NOT** be used to support overhead, political advocacy, deficit reduction activities, projects that have already been completed, or for activities that constitute legally required mitigation for the adverse effects of an activity regulated or otherwise governed by state or Federal law. Salaries of full-time employees may be part of the grant request as long as they are for only time spent directly on planning, administration and/or “on the ground” work on the project. Applicants are urged to not make “salaries” a major part of the funding request. Applicants are strongly urged to discuss project ideas with the Coordinator prior to submitting proposals if questions about eligibility exist.

**For questions relative to project development and submission contact: Jeff Boxrucker, Coordinator, Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership; 405-659-1797;** [**jboxrucker@sbcglobal.net**](mailto:jboxrucker@sbcglobal.net)**.**

**Proposal Requirements:** Proposals must be submitted using the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership on-line submission form. Go to <http://www.friendsofreservoirs.com/grants/submit-a-project/large-grant/>

Timelines may use a June 1, 2021 starting date, but the actual start date will be determined by completion of the contract document (funding is not likely to be available prior to June 2021 and more likely in early fall 2021).

**Proposal Selection Process:** Final projects will be selected for funding following review by the Regional Working Groups. Members of each Regional Working Group (geographically aligned with the Association of Fish and Wildlife Association regions) will review and score project proposals based on the criteria listed below. Each of the Regional Working Groups will submit their prioritized list of projects to the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership Executive Committee which will select projects for funding at their fall meeting (October 2020). Applicants will be made aware of their proposal’s ranking shortly thereafter, but final approval of projects is based on funding available. Given that funding is from federal sources, environmental compliance documents (Federal Assistance Biological Assistance/ ESA Evaluation Form, NEPA Exclusion and National Historic Preservation Act Form) are required. Successful applicants will be advised on how to fill out these documents. The RFHP Coordinator is available to assist in this process.

**Previously Funded Projects:** The RFHP Executive Committee is concerned that high ranking proposals from previously funded projects will limit our ability to fund new high-quality proposals. However, we are also cognizant of the need for our partners to continue the high-quality habitat restoration work that is ongoing on previously funded projects. To address these concerns, we will continue to accept proposals from previously funded proposals but reduce the funding request by 50% if the project was funded once previously and by 75% if funding was received twice previously. Hopefully the pool of local project partners has grown to offset a reduced level of funding from RFHP. However, if objectives of the new proposal are significantly different than those of previously funded projects (different project on the same reservoir) the proposal will be treated as a “first-time” proposal.

**Evaluation criteria:** Projects will be scored according to criteria in three categories:

* **Category I: Aquatic Habitat Restoration/Protection (155 possible points)**
  + Priority Regional Reservoir Habitat Impairments
    - RFHP completed a nationwide reservoir habitat impairment assessment in 2013
    - Impairments were prioritized by region of the country (see map and table in Appendix B)
      * Proposals will score more points if addressing the higher regional habitat impairments (table in Appendix B);
      * Clearly state the impairment(s) that the project is focusing on and state how project will address the impairment(s);
      * Cite a management plan that identifies the impairment (if available and include a link if published on the web) Note: contact the management agency to see if a written plan addressing habitat impairments exists and state clearly in the proposal whether or not you are addressing habitat issues identified in a management plan.
  + Clearly state the objective(s) of the project. Objectives should include how the project will address the impairment and what performance measures will be used to determine success.
    - Examples of performance measures include:
      * Siltation/turbidity and excessive nutrients
        + Amount (area or length) of riparian area stabilized;
        + Amount of sedimentation reduced (rate, tons/ac etc.);
        + Number of sediment retention structures installed or % base load treated;
        + Number of watershed BMP’s implemented (sewer pump-outs, farming practice improvements, pet waste policies, removal of impervious surfaces etc.);
        + Amount (area) of wetlands created, protected or restored for nutrient removal;
        + Amount of nutrients removed (could include deactivation with alum or physical removal by excavation).
      * Degraded shorelines and/or loss of sensitive habitats
        + Amount (length or linear ft2) of shoreline wetlands or submergent/emergent vegetation protected, created or restored;
        + Amount (length or linear ft2) of shoreline habitat protected, created or restored;
        + Amount (area) of cove habitat protected, created or restored.
      * Structural habitat
        + Amount of structure added;

Number and size of brush piles, rock piles, etc.

* + - * + Number of native plants planted along with number and size of structures built to protect plants from herbivory;
        + Acres of nuisance/invasive plants treated/removed
        + Changes in water quality parameters;
        + Changes in fish sampling catch rates in affected area,
        + Changes in rates of recruitment, or population size structure;
        + Changes in angler catch rates, harvest rates, and measures of directed fishing effort;
        + Measures of recreational use or economic benefit.
      * Water Regime
        + Negotiations held with water management agencies;

Fisheries-favorable water level management plan/water release schedule secured;

Water rights secured;

Fish loss barriers installed.

* + - * Connectivity
        + Acres of cove/backwater habitat reconnected to main body of reservoir;
        + Miles of stream/river reconnected to body of reservoir;

Barriers to upstream migration removed.

* Describe the type and duration of monitoring following completion of the restoration efforts. Given the preferred project duration (12-18 months), project monitoring will likely be beyond the scope of project funding but will be the responsibly of project partners. (**Project monitoring and evaluation is a major component of the proposal scoring process and should be an integral part of proposal development.)**
  + - Include duration of monitoring program;
    - Include a brief description of what, if any, baseline information is available.
  + Describe the project deliverables, i.e., amount of natural/artificial habitat added, acres of vegetation planted/established, feet of shoreline restored/stabilized, acres of wetlands established.
    - Be sure that project deliverables align with the objectives stated above.
  + Will project deliverables impact potential climate impacts on reservoir habitat conditions?
    - Examples of deliverables include water level management adaptations to offset increasing drought conditions, littoral habitat restoration methods aimed at “chasing the shoreline” as water recedes, native aquatic plant restoration.
* **Category II: Quality of Life (50 pts)**
  + Would the habitat project in question help the RFHP achieve its objectives to provide, protect and enrich quality of life for all Americans?
    - Maintain or restore water quality in reservoir systems;
    - Promote enhanced access, environmental amenities and nature experiences and opportunities on and adjacent to reservoir to enhance public awareness of the value of reservoirs;
    - Promote conservation of fish and aquatic resources to boaters and other water-based recreationists;
    - Support recreational industries and related economic activities that advance watershed health and contribute to conservation of fisheries and aquatic habitats in reservoir systems.
  + Would the project restore/enhance habitat that would directly support an economically important or high-use fishery (as documented in past studies or the published literature) or other types of fisheries within the project area? **List the targeted sport fishes that the project is intended to affect in order of priority.**
  + Would project outcomes lead to improvements in water quality for human health, recreational use, or ecological health of the reservoir system? Be specific in how this project directly or indirectly will positively affect water quality.

**Category III: Partnerships, Fund Leveraging, and Promotion (90 pts)**

* + Would the habitat project in question help the RFHP achieve its objectives to establish partnerships between management agencies and reservoir stakeholders; leverage outside sources of funding; and advance public awareness and understanding of the value of healthy reservoir systems?
    - Expand the partnership base of Friends of Reservoirs to include additional States, relevant federal and tribal agencies, non-profit and NGO’s, recreational industries and industry associations, reservoir and power generation authorities, reservoir homeowner associations, municipalities and local businesses, local watershed associations and conservation groups, irrigators, and others affected by reservoirs.
    - Promote or add to the information on the “Science” page on [www.friendsofreservoirs.com](http://www.friendsofreservoirs.com) as a tool for reservoir management agencies to prioritize habitat management efforts.
    - Support and participate in watershed planning initiatives to promote implementation of best management practices for conservation of fisheries and fish habitat in reservoir systems.
  + List all partners involved in the project
    - Include type of partner, i.e., state, federal, non-governmental agency (ngo), municipality, user-groups (bass clubs, conservation organization, lake associations);
    - To be considered a partner they must appear in the budget table and provide either cash or in-kind contributions to the project;
    - Identify the degree of involvement that the state fish and wildlife management agency has with the project **(letter of support from state fish and wildlife agency must accompany the proposal).**
  + Develop a budget and include funds leveraged from all partners (list all partners and the amount of cash and/or in-kind contribution from each partner separately in the budget table included in Appendix A).

**Appendix A**

**Proposal Format**

**A. Applicant Information:**

Name and address of applicant organization

Name, title, and contact information (address, phone number and e-mail) of principal investigator or project leader

Name of Friends of Reservoirs member organization involved in the project (if applicable)

**B. Friends of Reservoirs (FOR) Group that is active in the project:**

FOR membership provides bonus points that have been critical for project selection over the past several grant cycles. FOR members typically are local fishing/conservation clubs, municipalities, regional conservation organizations, etc. Contact the RFHP Coordinator or go to the Members Page on the RFHP website <http://www.friendsofreservoirs.com/members/> to see if any local group is a current member of Friends of Reservoirs.

**C. Project Information:**

Title

Location – Reservoir name; GPS coordinates if possible; map of project location is required

U.S. Congressional District (available on the web)

Target species (listed in priority order)

Region reservoir is located in (see map in Appendix B);

Project objective(s)

Estimated on-the-ground start and end dates (not award date)

Amount of grant and estimated total cost of project - Add details under section D. below.

List of partners **(to be considered a partner they must appear in the budget table and provide either cash or in-kind contributions to the project)**

**D. Project Description (largest portion of proposal):**

1. **Project overview** to include the existing relevant habitat conditions and the desired or targeted conditions (project outcomes expected i.e., size of area to be restored, number of habitat structures to be installed, species that will benefit from the restoration activity and the specific restoration methods and techniques that will be used). **The project overview is a critical part of the application** that should provide reviewers with sufficient detail to fully understand the proposed project. Please review the Evaluation Criteria above to ensure that all relevant information has been included.
2. **Monitoring plan overview**, including project goals, monitoring parameters, monitoring methods and schedule, and target and reference values.
3. **Outreach plan overview** summarizing critical activities for stakeholder/ community involvement.
4. **Project deliverables** should state the amount of habitat created/restored. Examples include amount (number, acres) of natural or artificial habitat added/restored, acres of native vegetation planted/established; linear feet of shoreline restored/stabilized, acres of wetlands established.
5. **List of required permits** and any other environmental compliance issues to be considered (Federal, state, local), indicating any that have already been secured or addressed. Projects will not have final approval for funding until all permits/compliance documents have been submitted and approved by the proper authorities (typically the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
6. **Project timeline.** Projects should be designed to begin in June 2021 and have a 12-18 month duration (extensions are available due to extenuating circumstances such as weather delays or unusual water levels).

**Note: Monitoring, outreach and protection and maintenance of the project site may be outside the scope of the funding request. If so, clearly state that these activities will be funded and conducted by project partners in most cases after the end date of the proposal.**

**D. Budget:**

1. **Amount requested** through Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership.

2. **Amount of in-kind** contributions (specify amounts and sources, both in kind and cash for each partner). Federal funds cannot be used as in-kind contributions. Use the table below. **Partner Contributions must be listed separately in table. Add more lines to table if needed.**

3. The timeline should be an approximation of when the funds under each funding category will be spent, i.e., June 2021 through December 2022.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Categories** | **Partner**  **Contribution Amount** | **Cash or In-Kind** | **Timeline**  **(anticipated date of expenditures)** |
| Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership |  |  |  |
| Administrative/Technical Services |  |  |  |
| Construction Costs/Materials |  |  |  |
| Labor (paid) |  |  |  |
| Labor (volunteer) |  |  |  |
| Miscellaneous (outreach materials) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Partner B (name) |  |  |  |
| Administrative/Technical Services |  |  |  |
| Construction Costs/Materials |  |  |  |
| Labor (paid) |  |  |  |
| Labor (volunteer) |  |  |  |
| Miscellaneous (outreach materials) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Partner C (name) |  |  |  |
| Administrative/Technical Services |  |  |  |
| Construction Costs/Materials |  |  |  |
| Labor (paid) |  |  |  |
| Labor (volunteer) |  |  |  |
| Miscellaneous (outreach materials) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total Direct Costs** |  |  |  |

\* Volunteer labor should be calculated at $10/hr for age 16 and under; 18/hr other volunteers; agency staff labor rates @ $24/hr

4. **Budget narrative:** A budget justification should be included to further explain how the funds will be used. Please explain expenditures in detail. Major equipment purchases, types of supplies, and specific contracts should be identified. An explanation of each line item in the Reservoir Partnership portion of the project must be included.

5. Map(s) of the proposed project location and site in addition to the described location under B above.

**Optional supporting materials** (do not count toward page limits):

1. Aerial or on-the-ground photos of the proposed project site. Though not required, these visual aids will help to support the proposal. Photos taken from the ground should show the current condition of the site. All photos should be identified with date of photo and location.

2. Letters of Support-Besides letters in support of the project from community leaders,

stakeholders, or others, documentation may include support letter(s) from those owning land upon which project will be undertaken, such as private landowners or appropriate public land owners agency resource personnel.Lake management plans and/or habitat plans that recommend the type of habitat work proposed by this project, though not required, are helpful and receive added points in the review process. **Letter of support from state fisheries management agency staff member is required.**

**Proposals must be submitted via the electronic submission form at:** <http://www.friendsofreservoirs.com/grants/submit-a-project/large-grant/> **by 15 August 2020.**

**APPENDIX B**



* Regions above were used to differentiate priority impairments in the assessment.
* Lists of impairments are based on the percent of reservoirs in each region that were moderately to high or highly impaired for individual impairments.
* Lists of impairments for each region are in priority order (see table on next page).

**Priority Impairments by Region**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **REGION**  **PRIORITZED REGIONAL IMPAIRMENTS**  (Top 2 Impairments in each Region-50 pts; 3rd and 4th-25 pts; 5th and 6th-10 pts) | **IMPAIRMENT** | **POINTS** |
| **Western Mountain** | Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) | **50** |
| Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) |
| Excessive Nutrients (algae blooms) | **25** |
| Limited nutrients |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) | **10** |
| Siltation/Turbidity |
| **Xeric** | Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) | **50** |
| Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) |
| Excessive Nutrients (algae blooms) | **25** |
| Siltation/Turbidity |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) | **10** |
| Connectivity (lack of connection with embayments/backwaters, tributaries) |
| **Northern Plains** | Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) | **50** |
| Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) | **25** |
| Excessive Nutrients (algae blooms) |
| Siltation/Turbidity | **10** |
| Connectivity |
| **Upper Midwest** | Excessive Nutrients (algae blooms) | **50** |
| Siltation/Turbidity |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) | **25** |
| Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) |
| Excessive Vegetation (typically invasive/non-native plants) | **10** |
| Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) |
| **Southern Plains** | Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) | **50** |
| Siltation/Turbidity |
| Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) | **25** |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) |
| Connectivity | **10** |
| Excessive Nutrients (algae blooms) |
| **Temperate Plains** | Excessive Nutrients | **50** |
| Siltation/Turbidity |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) | **25** |
| Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) |
| Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) | **10** |
| Connectivity |
|  | | |
| **Coastal Plains** | Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) | **50** |
| Siltation/Turbidity |
| Excessive Nutrients | **25** |
| Connectivity |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) | **10** |
| Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) |
| **Northern Appalachians** | Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) | **50** |
| Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) |
| Siltation/Turbidity | **25** |
| Excessive Nutrients (algae blooms) |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) | **10** |
| Limited Nutrients |
| **Southern Appalachians** | Siltation/Turbidity | **50** |
| Excessive Nutrients (algae blooms) |
| Excessive mudflats/shallowness (little deep water refuge) | **25** |
| Limited littoral structure (lack of woody structure and vegetation, shoreline erosion) |
| Water Regime (extreme and/or mistimed fluctuations, low retention) | **10** |
| Connectivity |