

Increasing Recreational Fisheries Engagement through the Fish Habitat Partnerships (FY21) Call for Ideas

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

Background: The goals of this funding opportunity are to raise the visibility of NOAA and its partners' habitat work and to enhance collaboration with the recreational fishing community. The recreational fishing community understands that healthy habitat leads to more recreational fishing opportunities, and they have expressed continued interest in collaborating on habitat projects. The National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) and individual Fish Habitat Partnerships (FHPs) provide strategic opportunities to advance priority habitat conservation projects while also engaging recreational anglers.

Funding Available: Approximately \$135k is available, and will be used to support several FHP projects (up to ~\$75k per project).

Time Frame: Projects may take place over the course of more than one year, but funds must be obligated by 09/30/21. Funds do not need to be spent by 9/30/21.

Projects must:

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:
 - Direct participation of recreational anglers in FHP habitat projects, including research, monitoring, and on-the-ground restoration.
 - Education and outreach for anglers on habitat conservation topics.
 - Holding an event centered on habitat and recreational fishing opportunity that engages the recreational fishing community and partners.
3. Focus on habitat restoration, conservation or protection for saltwater or anadromous 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 among NOAA, an FHP, and recreational fishing partners.
2. Have the potential to develop longer-term relationships with recreational fishing community/partners.
3. Engage new or non-traditional recreational fishermen/partners
4. Result in improved fish habitat availability or quality, particularly for species with high recreational or socioeconomic significance.

Call for Ideas: Please send any project ideas (1-2 pages, not including budget) to alex.atkinson@noaa.gov and tim.sartwell@noaa.gov by **January 31, 2021**, and copy your coastal FHP coordinator. Include:

- the project location and FHP;
- a brief project description;
- an explanation of how the project engages recreational anglers or partners;
- a project timeline;
- and the project budget (broken down into cost categories).

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can submit proposals?

We'd prefer proposals come from the FHP coordinator or an FHP partner, but will also accept proposals from within NOAA. All proposals of work within an FHP should be discussed with the relevant coastal FHP coordinator.

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

Typically, the fisheries Commissions and Councils are simple mechanisms we can utilize to disburse money. NOAA Fisheries has existing agreements with every Marine Fisheries 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. However, if no clear mechanism is found, it may not be possible to fund the proposal this year.

Will funds need to go through NOAA Fisheries regional offices?

The path of the funds depends on the funding mechanism, but funds will not have to pass through the regional offices to go to the participant.

Can funds be put through the non-profit arm of NFHP (Beyond the Pond) to get to the FHP to implement the project?

We are not able to move money through the non-profit arm of NFHP (Beyond the Pond).

When do the funds need to be spent?

Funds must be obligated by the end of FY20 (September 30, 2020) but do not need to be spent by that date.

What does it mean for funds to be obligated?

In order for funds to be obligated, they must be processed onto a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, etc. (whatever funding mechanism we use to move the money from NOAA/OHC to the awardee, or to the entity transferring the funding to the awardee). That processing must happen by September 30, 2020, but the performance period of the project may be longer.

Over what time frame can the projects take place?

The funding opportunity is for the FY20 fiscal year. However, projects can take place over the course of more than one year.

Can projects focus on anadromous species?

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

What are the reporting requirements?

There are no formal reporting requirements for this funding opportunity, but the NOAA 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 describe progress.

Historically, funds have been transferred to FHP partners through the interstate fisheries commissions, which may have their own reporting requirements for funded projects.