



FY2027 DFHP Request for Project Proposals (RFP)

Applications Due October 2, 2026

The Desert Fish Habitat Partnership (DFHP) is pleased to announce our FY2027 Request for Project Proposals (RFP). As one of 20 federally recognized National Fish Habitat Partnerships, DFHP is an Initiative of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and a collaborative effort partnering 11 western states, seven federal agencies, tribal organizations, non-governmental organizations, and private conservation groups that seek to cooperatively conserve native desert fish species across their historic ranges by protecting, restoring, and enhancing aquatic ecosystems. Project funding through this RFP is made available to grantees annually through the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) program. That NFHP funding is made available by Congressional authorizations through the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act.

America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act

America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act was passed by Congress and signed by the President on October 30, 2020. The ACE Act places an emphasis on restoration efforts that will improve recreational fishing opportunities and public use of the resource. Improvements in public access as a component of projects are also encouraged. Specific project requirements include:

- We request that NFHP grant funds are matched 1:1 with non-federal funds if possible. Indian Tribes as primary applicants are exempt from this match requirement. Non-federal match can include cash and/or in-kind labor, materials, or equipment if there are no federal ties to those funds. State agency funds can be used for the non-federal match if labor and/or materials are not being matched to another federal grant. State agency funds that are being used to match other federal grants are not eligible as match but should be identified as additional project support. Match must also occur during the grant period of performance.
- All NFHP funded projects must include an outreach/education component.
- Monitoring and evaluation measures must be included as part of the project application but should not make up a significant portion of the funding request.
- 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 appropriate state agency in the state in which the project is occurring.

Eligible Projects: Projects considered for funding address science-based habitat protection, restoration, and enhancement activities that benefit native desert fish species addressed by DFHP (for a complete species list, visit the [DFHP Strategic Plan](#)). Types of eligible projects may include riparian or instream habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration; barrier removal or construction; range-wide population or watershed habitat assessments to prioritize and plan habitat conservation; and habitat-related

community outreach and education actions. We encourage projects that contribute to larger landscape or ecosystem-based aquatic restoration efforts and partnering with other Fish Habitat Partnerships such as the Western Native Trout Initiative on suitable project opportunities.

NFHP funds must be used for on-the-ground habitat projects (engineering assessment, design, construction, implementation, monitoring, etc.), scientific assessments, outreach or communication projects, or acquisition of real property. Funds may not be used for research projects. Funded projects must be completed within 18-24 months of receipt of contract agreement in 2027, and multi-year projects MUST be broken into distinct phases by year for tasks, accomplishments, and budget.

NFHP National Conservation Priorities: FY27 project proposals must fall under at least one of the NFHP National Conservation Priorities. Key priorities that support DFHP species and habitats are listed below. A complete list of the priorities and example strategies for each NFHP Priority can be found [here](#):

- Conserve waters and habitats where all processes and functions are operating within their expected range or natural variation.
- Conserve hydrologic conditions for fish.
- Conserve physical and living habitats and features that support viable and sustainable species and/or populations in impacted or at-risk systems.
- Reconnect fragmented fish habitats.
- Conserve water quality for fish.

DFHP FY27 Projects Focus: Under the FY27 Project Funding Opportunity project proposals that support the conservation of native desert fish species and the protection, restoration and enhancement of associated aquatic habitats are welcome from all four DFHP geographic regions (Lower Colorado, Upper Colorado, Rio Grande, and Basin and Range). Consistent with the DFHP 2026-2030 Strategic Plan, we encourage proposals that prioritize the following actions and outcomes:

- Actions that provide long-term protection of existing intact and healthy aquatic ecosystems that support desert fish species and populations.
- Actions that restore, enhance, and improve functionality to altered or degraded aquatic habitats that support at-risk desert fish species.
- The conservation of desert fish species and populations most at risk.
- Addressing information needs and data gaps supporting conservation of at-risk desert fishes.
- Projects that support education and outreach to increase public knowledge and understanding of desert fishes and desert aquatic habitats.

Proposal Review and Approval Process: The DFHP Steering Committee will review and rank applications based on their ability to meet the partnership's key priorities, strategic objectives (see the [DFHP Strategic Plan](#)), and other NFHP and ACE Act requirements. The ranked project proposals are then submitted to the NFHP Board for their approval. A list of the Board approved projects for all FHPs nationwide is then submitted to the US Department of Interior (DOI) for final approval. Funding for approved projects becomes available following final DOI review.

Anticipated Timeline:

August-Sept 2026	Applicants develop project proposals for funding consideration
October 2, 2026	Project Proposals Due
Oct 2026-Spring 2027	Proposals evaluated by DFHP Steering Committee, NFHP Board, DOI
March-May 2027	Announcement of awards to recipients (dependent on Congress appropriation)
May-Sept 2027	Agreements processed/funds awarded

Contact Information: Please contact the DFHP coordinator, Jon Sjoberg, at jon.sjoberg@wafwa.org with any questions. Below are DFHP's **Regional Representatives** who can answer questions specific to their respective regions and assist with the process.

Regional Representatives

Basin and Range

Chris Crookshanks (NDOW)

ccrookshanks@ndow.org

(775) 688-1530

Lower Colorado River including the Rio Yaqui, Rio de la Concepcion, and Rio Sonoyta

Brandon Senger (NDOW)

bsenger@ndow.org

(702) 668-3999

Upper Colorado River

Tom Fresques (BLM)

t1fresqu@blm.gov

(970) 876-9078

Rio Grande including Pecos River and Tularosa Basin

Joanna Hatt (NMDW)

Joanna.Hatt@dgf.nm.gov

(505) 500-5001



Applications must be received by 5PM Pacific Time, Friday, October 2, 2026.

The Application Forms and all application related information with specific guidance for completing the application is available on the [DFHP website](#). Submit completed proposals, including the application form in PDF format, the budget template and project metrics spreadsheets, and separate photos to the DFHP coordinator, Jon Sjoberg, at jon.sjoberg@wafwa.org by the deadline of **5PM Pacific Time, October 2, 2026**. *Late or incomplete applications will only be considered under special circumstances.*

Available Funding: NFHP project funding from The ACE Act is authorized annually and the available FY27 funding for DFHP projects is anticipated to be in the range of \$150,000-\$160,000. This is a very competitive process, and we anticipate our pool of applicants to exceed available funding. Project requests for funding in the range of \$5k-\$50k are strongly encouraged; proposals requesting over \$50k will be considered but may be subject to significantly more stringent review processes at the DOI level. Applicants are encouraged to meet or exceed the 1:1 non-Federal match request, which may include cash and/or in-kind labor, materials, or equipment if there are no Federal ties to those resources. Once the requested NFHP grant funds are matched with non-Federal cash or in-kind, an unlimited amount of other Federal or non-Federal contributions to the project are allowed and encouraged. DFHP gives special consideration to projects with more than the minimum non-Federal match.

NFHP funds are Federal funds, administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). All organizations that receive NFHP funding are required to follow all requirements for Federal grants,

including registration on the Federal System for Award Management (www.sam.gov), Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), Grants Solutions grant management system, and provide interim and annual reports to the USFWS and DFHP. NFHP funds are processed through a grant agreement completed through the USFWS Regional Offices or local Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office (FWCO). Grants are paid on a reimbursable basis. All Federal funding requires environmental compliance documents (Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and National Historic Preservation Act) to be approved prior to execution of a grant agreement. DFHP also requires the timely provision of copies of final reports with before/after project photos to DFHP.