



FY2026 Funding Application Guide Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership

The Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership (KPFHP) is seeking project proposals for FY2026 National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) funding. KPFHP is one of 20 regional fish habitat partnerships in the nation. KPFHP's mission is to protect, maintain, restore, and enhance fish habitat within Kenai Peninsula Borough watersheds. Projects need to address FY2026 NFHP Conservation Priorities, as well as KPFHP priorities. Project applications should also be submitted by a KPFHP partner or must have direct support from a partner. Applications are due by February 21, 2025.

KPFHP anticipates awarding approximately \$200,000 in FY2026 for projects that advance its mission. This amount is based on prior year's funding levels from NFHP and the amount may change. There is no maximum funding level, however we prefer funding projects in the range of \$10,000 - \$50,000. Additionally, a 1:1 nonfederal match is required for projects, except tribal projects (see details below).

KPFHP Priorities: Projects that address the highest ranked potential threats to fish habitat as identified in KPFHP's Conservation Action Plans will be the most competitive:

<u>Freshwater:</u> 1) Aquatic invasive species 2) Warming thermal regime 3) Incompatible commercial and residential development 4) Incompatible road development	<u>Marine:</u> 1) Oil spill prevention 2) Incompatible shoreline development 3) Beach alteration
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*Access KPFHP's Freshwater and Marine Conservation Action Plans [here](#).

NFHP National Conservation Priorities: Projects must address at least one National Conservation Priority:

- 1) Conserve waters and habitats where all processes and functions are operating within their expected range or natural variation
- 2) Conserve hydrologic conditions for fish
- 3) Conserve physical and living habitats and features that support viable and sustainable species and/or populations in impacted or at-risk systems
- 4) Reconnect fragmented fish habitats
- 5) Conserve water quality for fish
- 6) Support the structure and function of FHPs
- 7) Enhance recreational, commercial, subsistence, and traditional fishing opportunities when conducting projects that conserve fish habitat

*Read full descriptions of National Conservation Priorities [here](#).

American's Conservation Enhancement Act: All applicants should be aware that America's Conservation Enhancement Act (ACE Act) was passed on October 30, 2020, and introduces a number of new requirements to this funding opportunity. The following requirements should be noted:

- Grant funds must be matched 1:1 with non-federal funds, with an exception for Indian Tribes. Non-federal match can include cash and/or in-kind labor, materials, or equipment, as long as 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 and do not have a federal origin. State agency funds that are used to match other federal grants would not be eligible as match.
- All projects must include an outreach or education component that includes the local or regional community.
- 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 to 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 state agency responsible for sovereign land ownership and management in the state in which the project is occurring.

Monitoring Plan: All project proposals must include a monitoring plan. At a minimum, projects should describe an implementation monitoring plan designed to document that the project was constructed or completed as proposed. For more information on monitoring plans see the [NOAA Restoration Center Implementation Monitoring Guidance](#).

Partnerships: Collaboration with regional partners (tribal, federal, state, local, NGOs, etc.) is a key component of this funding opportunity. More weight will be given to projects that prioritize multi-partner collaborations, regardless of whether support is financial or in-kind. Support can also be demonstrated in the form of letters of support, cooperative agreements, etc.

Examples of Eligible Expenditures:

- Time spent for project planning, directing project activities, site assessments, travel to and from the project, and project oversight
- Equipment (monitoring equipment)
- Earthwork (contracts for earth moving, planting, structure installation, or other site preparation) and materials (rock, gravel, plants and planting supplies, materials for habitat structures)
- Inventory and assessment projects and projects that develop intellectual material that supports the goal and objectives of the KPFHP strategic plan
- Monitoring and evaluation such as pre/post project monitoring to evaluate biological and/or physical response to project activities

Examples of Ineligible Expenditures:

- Actions required by existing federal or state regulatory programs (KPFHP expenditures shall be in addition to, not in lieu of, other expenditures authorized or required from other entities under other agreements or provisions of law)
- Pre-award costs associated with administration, preliminary design, surveys, and appraisals
- Operation and maintenance of facilities, structures, or other construction
- Programmatic actions that operate in perpetuity (long-term monitoring efforts with no end date)
- Research/assessment projects with no direct application to KPFHP plans and cannot demonstrate linkage to current or possible future restoration or conservation projects

Project Duration: Funded projects must be completed within two years of receiving the agreement. Multi-year project applicants are encouraged to break their project into distinct phases by year for tasks, accomplishments, and budget.

USFWS Agreement and Reporting Requirements: NFHP funds are federal funds, administered through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). All organizations that receive NFHP funding are required to complete all requirements for federal grants, including registration on the federal System for Award Management (SAM.gov), Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), Grants Solutions grant management system, and provide interim and annual reports to the USFWS and KPFHP. NFHP funds are processed through a grant agreement completed through the USFWS Regional Offices. Grants are paid on a reimbursable basis. Please see [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Fish Habitat Partnership Program \(NFHP\) Application & Award Requirements October 2021 for more information](#). All federal funding requires environmental compliance documents (Federal Assistance Biological Assistance/ Endangered Species Act Evaluation Form, National Environmental Policy Act Exclusion and National Historic Preservation Act Form) to be approved prior to execution of a grant agreement. KPFHP also requires the timely provision of copies of final reports with before/after project photos.

Funding Timeline:

- February 21, 2025: Application deadline
- February 24 to March 31, 2025: Review period
- Spring/Summer 2026: Funding expected to be made available to approved projects

Scoring: KPFHP's Steering Committee will use the following criteria to score and rank project applications.

Eligibility: Applicant must be able to answer "yes" to each of the following questions:

- Does the project provide measurable benefits towards improving, maintaining or restoring fish habitat?
- Are there clear, informative descriptions of ecological benefits, and measurable goals and objectives?
- Does the project sponsor provide a 1:1 non-federal match, except tribal projects?
- Does the project address one or more of the highest rated potential threats to fish habitat identified in KPFHP's Conservation Action Plan?
- Is the project submitted by or supported by a partnership member of the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership?
- Is the applicant capable of completing the proposed project?

Scoring Criteria:

1. Resource Benefits (40 points maximum)

- Proposal provides clear descriptions of ecological benefits, and measurable goals and objectives?
- Proposal addresses the causes of fish population and fish habitat decline.
- Project addresses at least one KPFHP priority using one of the associated strategies from the Marine or Freshwater Conservation Action Plans, or Strategic Action Plan.
- Addresses at least one FY2025 National Conservation Priority (NCP).

2. Project Design (30 points maximum)

- Methods are clearly defined and appropriate to meet stated objectives.
- Identifies appropriate monitoring and evaluation measures and criteria.
- Project timeline clearly described and reasonable. Project can be completed within 2 years.
- Includes a regional outreach or educational component.

3. Project Cost (20 points maximum)

- Provides well defined budget linked to deliverables and outcomes.
- Project demonstrates matching funds (in-kind as well as financial).

4. Applicant Qualifications (10 points maximum)

- Applicant clearly demonstrates their ability to conduct the proposed work, and relevant project history.
- Any partners (tribal, federal, state, local, NGO, etc.) supporting and implementing the project are clearly described, including what role they have in the project (funding, implementation, technical assistance, etc.)

5. Bonus Points (5 points maximum)

- Proposal is for an on-the-ground conservation or restoration. (5 points)
- Project implemented by a Tribal entity. (5 points)

Applications are due by Sunday March 2, 2025

Applications for KPFHP funding are submitted via an online application portal. Only complete applications will be considered. Applicants must also submit a Budget (APPENDIX A) and Project Metrics (APPENDIX B)

[Access Application Portal](#)

Using the online application portal:

Once you begin your application in our online portal, you can take a break and continue working at a later date by clicking “Save and Continue Later”. The system will generate a link for you to return to your form. Please make a copy of the link. You may also choose to have the link emailed to you. We recommend that you copy the link first to ensure you have it, and then look in your spam folder if you do not see the link in your inbox. Your link will expire after 30 days and the software will not allow us to extend that time period. Once you are certain you are done with your application, click “Submit”. After clicking submit, you cannot return and edit your application. You will immediately receive a confirmation email, which contains your submitted application.

[APPENDIX A: Budget Template](#)

[APPENDIX B: Project Metrics](#)

We will provide an opportunity at our annual membership meeting (February 10, 2025) for a question and answer period with the Steering Committee for those submitting a proposal.

For questions and assistance applying please contact:

Trent Dodson

Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership Coordinator

Phone: (907)942-0829

Email: fishhabitat@kenaiwatershed.org