

Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund

**2026 National Program Field
Liaison-hosted Webinar for
Applicants**



Presented by





Why are we here?

- **NFWF 2026 Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund**
 - Help clarify which funding option best fits your project
 - Provide context around what makes a complete and competitive application
 - Discuss the program's federal compliance needs
 - Offer key resources and contacts to strengthen your proposal before submission
- Introduce the National Program Field Liaison Team

Today's Agenda

- **Welcome & Introductions**
- **Overview of the Western Big Game Program**
- **Funding Options & Eligibility**
- **Application Criteria Evaluation & Review**
- **Application Do's & Don'ts**
- **Tips for a Competitive Proposal**
- **Resources & Applicant Support**
- **Federal Compliance Overview (Presented by SWCA)**



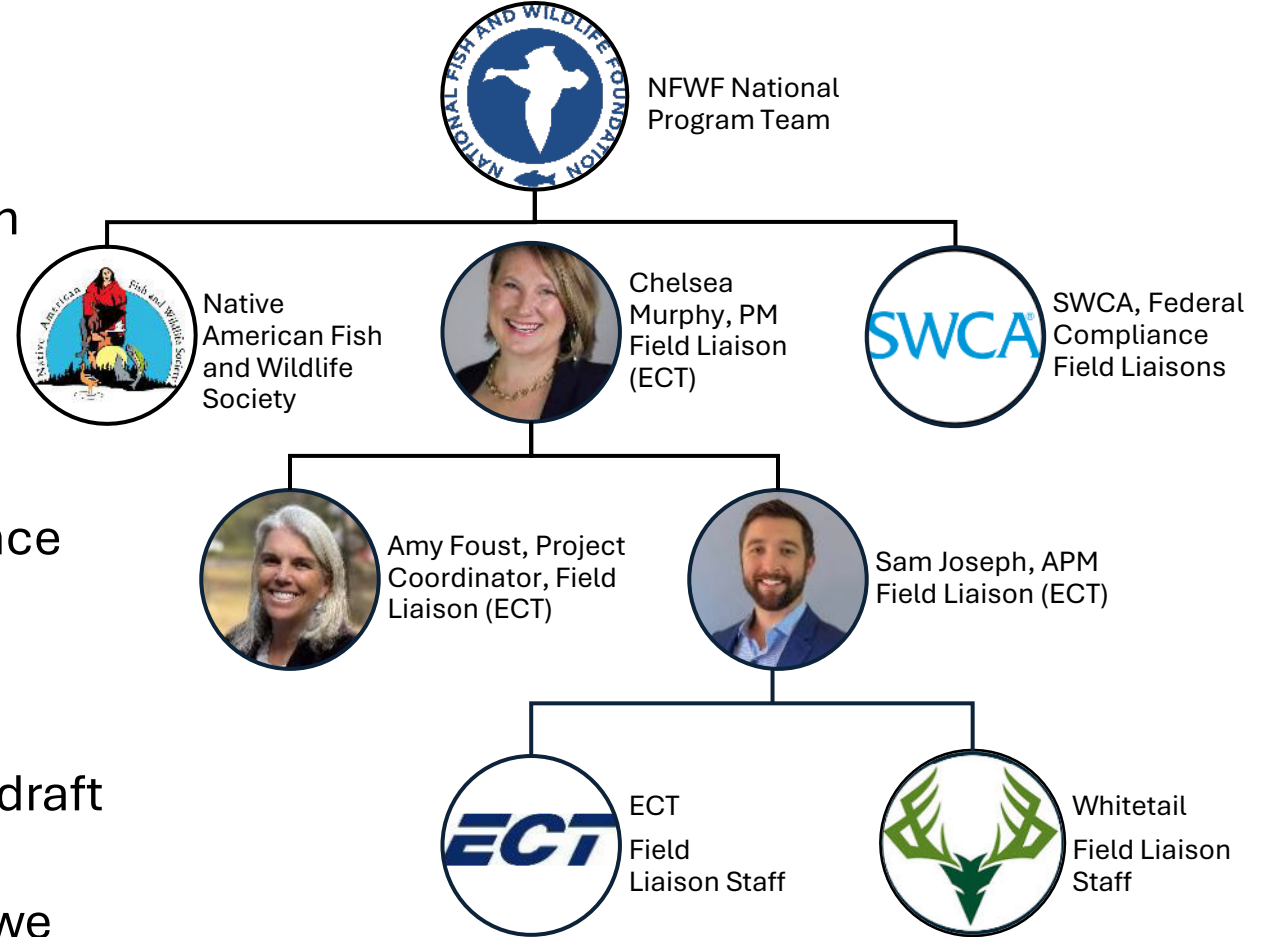
National Program Field Liaison Introduction

ECT's Field Liaison Team

- Help applicants understand the Western Big Game Program (Option A and Option B)
- Workshop project ideas and help shape them into program-aligned proposals
- Support applicants in developing more competitive, program-aligned applications
- Provide post-award assistance, including debriefs and administrative/technical guidance

We do NOT:

- Write proposals for applicants
- Provide early detailed reviews or edits of draft applications
- Conduct technical project work, though we can offer guidance and direction



What is the Western Big Game Program?

- A competitive NFWF grant program supporting conservation of big game seasonal habitat and migration corridors
- Supports on-the-ground habitat restoration, enhancement, and connectivity projects for elk, mule deer, pronghorn, and other big game species.
- Increases habitat connectivity and landscape resiliency across western states.
- Focused on priority winter range, stopover areas, and movement pathways identified by states and Tribal wildlife agencies



2026 Program Changes

Two distinct funding options:
A and B

Options differ in:

- Applicant eligibility
- Geographic focus
- Match requirements



Funding Priorities (Options A & B)



Habitat Restoration & Enhancement

Restore degraded priority habitat, stopover areas, and migration corridors



Connectivity & Movement

Wildlife friendly fencing measures (modifying, removing, installing or seasonally adapting)



Long-Term Habitat Protection

Develop and implement voluntary management agreements to improve bottlenecks within corridors

Eligible Activities (Options A & B)

- Vegetation management, such as:
 - Removing encroaching trees from sagebrush ecosystems
 - Rehabilitating fire-damaged areas
 - Treating invasive vegetation
- Wildlife-friendly fencing measures, such as:
 - Modifying via smooth wire
 - Removing, installing, or seasonally adapting fencing to improve big game movement
- Voluntary conservation management agreements
 - Protecting priority habitat, stopover areas, and migration corridor bottlenecks

TIP

Reviewers are assessing readiness and relevance.



Understanding the Two Funding Options

Option A & Option B: Key Differences

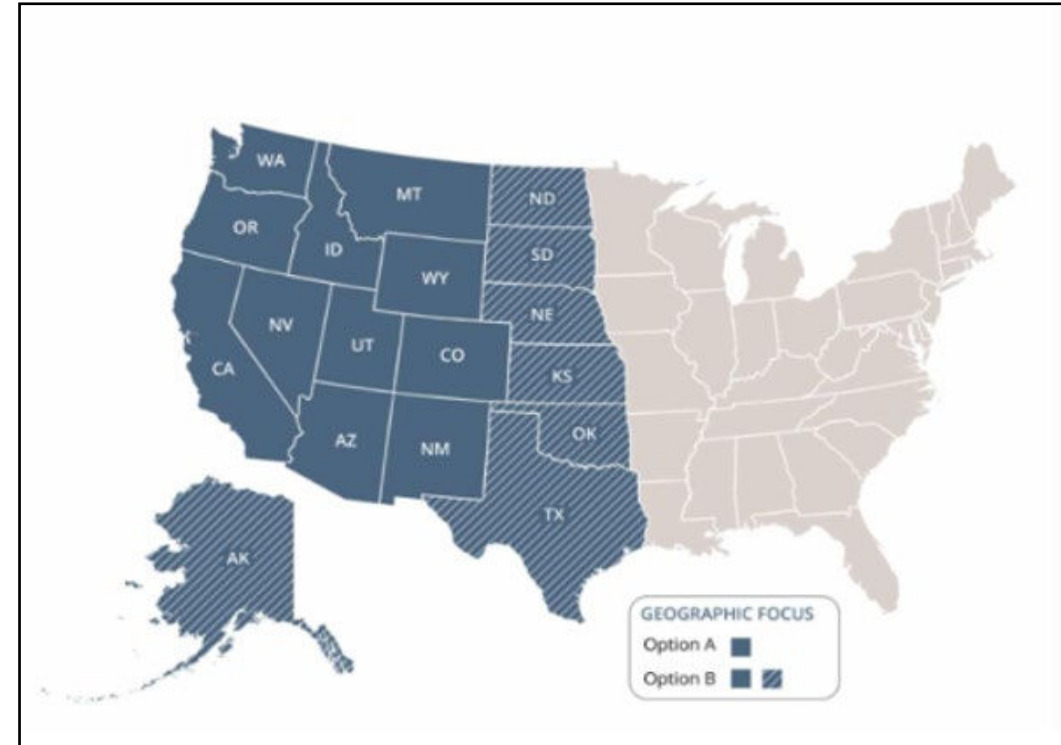


ECT Field Liaisons will be supporting applicants pursuing Option B

Applies to Option A & B
• Located within SO 3362 focal areas or Native Nation priorities • Focus on seasonal habitat, stopover areas, or migration corridors Project duration: 1-3 years • Use required NFWF metrics • Align with state or Tribal wildlife priorities (see state action plans) • Implementation required

Option A
Funding: BLM, USFWS, USFS, and Conoco Phillips Eligible applicants: • 501(c) nonprofits • Federal agencies • State & local governments • Tribal governments • Educational institutions Geographic scope: • 11 Western States Notes: • Priority for shovel-ready / NEPA-complete projects • Strong preference for projects that can be completed within ~2 years

Option B
Funding: DOI through USFWS Eligible applicants: • State governments • Federally recognized Tribes Geographic scope: • 11 Western States • And 6 Great Plains States (KS, NE, ND, OK, SD, TX) and AK Notes: • Shovel-ready projects preferred; planning eligible but implementation required • Emphasis on projects aligned with Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) connectivity priorities



Geographic Focus of Options A and B

Policy Framework: Secretarial Order 3362 & Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

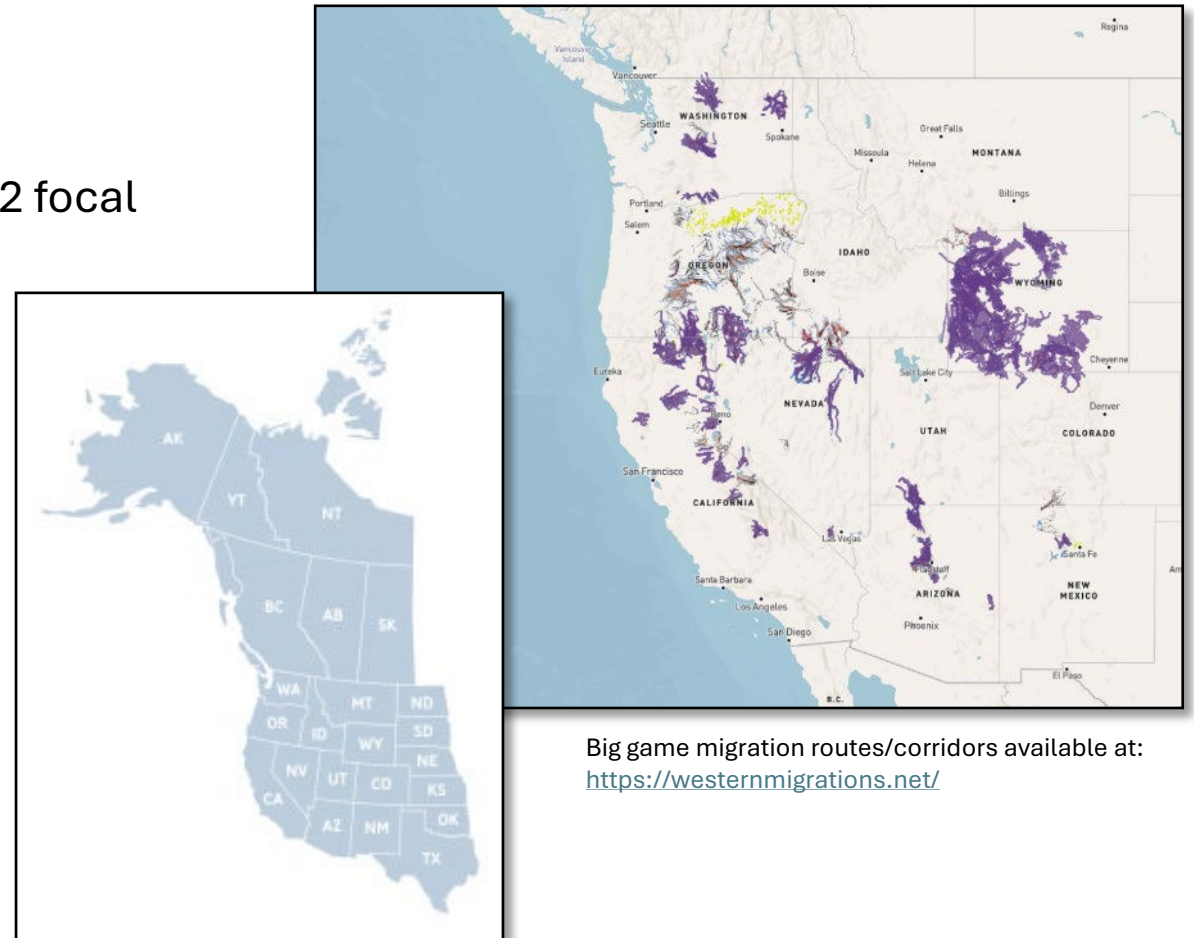
Option A and Option B must be located within SO 3362 focal areas or align with Native Nation wildlife priorities.

Secretarial Order 3362 (SO 3362)

Directs federal coordination with 11 western states and Tribal governments to conserve/enhance winter range and migration corridors.

Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA)

Supports cross-state coordination in western migration corridors that span multiple states (Relevant to Option B ONLY).



Map of WAFWA member states/provinces available at: [Wildlife Movement and Connectivity Initiative Foundational Document 2025-2028 – WAFWA](https://wildlifemovementandconnectivityinitiative.org/foundational-document-2025-2028-wafwa)

Big game migration routes/corridors available at: <https://westernmigrations.net/>

Option A & Option B: Key Differences

Number of grants: ~6-10
Grant range: \$100,000+
Match requirement:
 Minimum 1:1 non-federal
 match (cash or in-kind)

- Number of Grants:** ~10-25
- Grant range:** \$100,000-\$2M
- Match requirement:**
 - States: 10% of total project costs, at least 2.5% must be cash
 - Tribes: 3% of project costs, with 0.75% as cash (Often supported by Native Americans in Philanthropy)

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

Option A ■

Option B ■ ▨

Geographic Focus of Options A and B

Important Dates

- Live NFWF-Hosted Applicant Webinar:
Thursday March 12, 2026, 3-4 PM EST
- NAFWS Tribal Webinar:
Tuesday, March 24, 2026 1 PM EST
- Full Proposal Due Date:
April 21, 2026 11: 59 PM EST
- Review Period:
April – August 2026
- Awards Announced:
August 2026



Application Evaluation Criteria

Program Goals and Priorities

- Aligns with Program Goals & Priorities
- Quantifiable Metrics
- Appropriate Monitoring
- Project Sustainability

Technical Merit

- Sound & Feasible
- Appropriate Technical Experts Involved
- Achievable timelines & work plans
- Sound environmental compliance approach

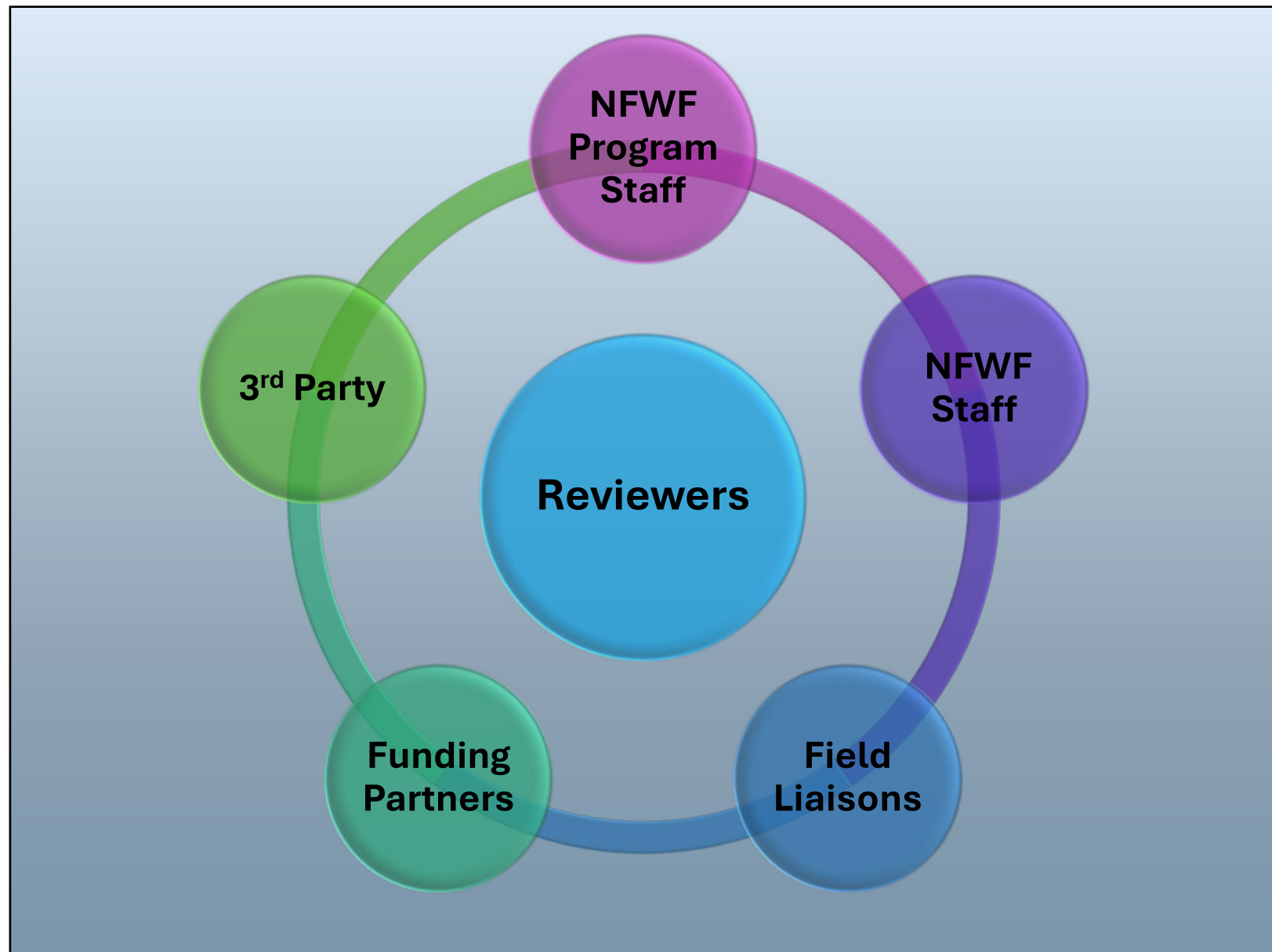
Partnership & Community Impact

- Collaborates with the community
- Has partnership and stakeholder buy-in
- Includes letters of support or other documentation

Budget

- Budget is reasonable
- Has matching contributions

Application Review Process



***Final funding decisions are made by NFWF**



Application Do's & Don'ts



Do

- Check eligibility for each program
- Clearly align proposal with Big Game priorities
- Provide strong letters of support
- Set a realistic project timeframe
- Propose clear, itemized budget
- Define targeted, achievable metrics
- Introduce partners & engage meaningfully
- Connect the reader to specific content in the “Other Uploads” Section.

Don't

- Propose projects outside identified priority areas.
- Provide limited narrative explanation of how activities will be implemented.
- Don't select more metrics than your project activities can support within the proposed budget and timeline.
- Describe engagement without a clear plan
- Submit supplemental materials that do not clearly strengthen or clarify your proposal.



Application tips are informed by reviewer experience and supplement, but do not replace, RFP requirements.



Tips for Submitting a Compelling Narrative



Narrative is the heart and soul of the application & you only have 6 pages!



You can adjust the formatting (e.g., change to single spaced, adjust the margins).



Technically sound proposals are important, but the audience is not a technical specialist, so highly technical writing is not needed/wanted.



We appreciate well written applications, but you don't have to be a professional grant writer.



State how will priorities be advanced, outcomes achieved, and engagement carried out.

Narrative Question #1

- **Grant Activities and Outcomes:**
- Elaborate on the primary activities that will be employed through the grant.
- Explain how these activities are expected to lead to the outcome(s).
- Discuss what makes these outcomes achievable and important.
- Describe how these activities relate to established plans (management, conservation, recovery, etc.) and priority conservation needs in the specific project location.



Narrative Question #2



TIP

Be Thoughtful with your Metrics!

Tracking Metrics:

- Indicate how the project will monitor, assess progress and report on the metrics selected previously in the application.
- Discuss any challenges or limitations anticipated with tracking the metrics.

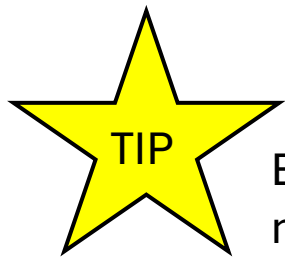
TIP

Review the metrics identified in the RFP and select those that **directly align with your activities.**

Narrative Question #3

Community Impact:

- Describe the community(ies) where the project will take place, who will benefit from the project, and how they were or will be engaged in project development and implementation.



Explain **HOW** you will achieve meaningful engagement.



Narrative Question #4



Project Team:

- List key individuals and describe their qualifications relevant for project implementation.

TIP

Identify **WHO** is responsible for **WHAT**.

TIP

Describe **HOW** partners contribute to successful implementation.

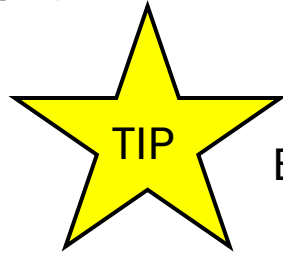
TIP

Clarify whether partnerships are established or proposed.

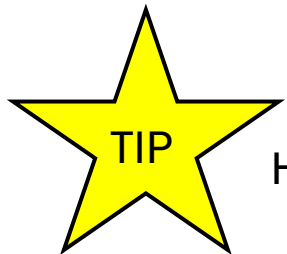
Narrative Question #5

Context:

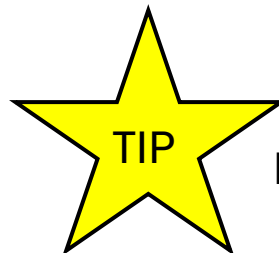
- Please provide a brief progress update on any past or current NFWF grants that are directly applicable to this proposal.



Be brief!



Highlight Success



Build on Lessons Learned

Narrative Question #6



Other (Optional): Provide any further information important for the review of this proposal.

Keep in Mind

- Letters of Support are required.
- Limited to 10 additional pages of supporting material.



Supplemental documents should be referenced in the narrative

Budget & Budget Narrative

- You must fill out the budget narrative section with details.
- If using a contractor, include a descriptive budget narrative explaining what the contracted work will cover
- If budgeting for materials, break costs out by category (e.g., fence posts, seed) rather than combining into a single line item
- If using a contractor, do not list a lump-sum cost; break out labor separately from materials and supplies. Additional details on contracted work can be provided in the project narrative.
- May want to include a detailed breakdown of the budget as a table in the “other uploads” section.
- The budget will translate into your expenditure table in EasyGrants if awarded.
- Indirect Costs:
 - NICRA vs. *de minimis*
 - Narrative description of what the indirect rate will be used for.



TIP

Rent Equipment Where Possible

TIP

Account for Personnel Pay Increases

TIP

Pay Attention to Travel & Expense Categories

NFWF - Applicant Resources

- Available on the [NFWF Big Game Fund Website](#):
 - [NFWF Webinar on March 12, 2026](#)
 - [Request for Proposals – Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund - 2026](#)
 - [EasyGrants Tipsheet](#)



Schedule a Proposal Lab Session with NFWF by clicking [HERE](#) or use the QR code below.



Questions for NFWF?

NFWF Contacts:

- Seth Gallagher, Program Director of Grasslands and Mountain West
seth.gallagher@nfwf.org
- Dani Tinnin, Rocky Mountain Regional Manager
dani.tinnin@nfwf.org
- Margaret Card-Silache, Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinator
margaret.card-silache@nfwf.org

[National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Webinar](#)



ECT - Applicant Resources



Please visit ECT's Western Big Game Webpage

(Insert website address here)

- Presentation Recording
- Presentation Slides
- Presentation Transcript
- FAQ (coming soon)

Schedule a Proposal Lab Session with the Field Liaison Team by clicking [HERE](#) or use the QR Code.



Email us at:
NationalProgramLiaisons@ectinc.com

A group of seven pronghorns stands in a field of dry, yellowish-brown grass. The animals are arranged in two rows, with four in the back and three in the front. They all have light brown and white fur with dark stripes on their necks. The text "Thank You!" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

Thank You!



NEXT:

Western Big Game Seasonal
Habitat and Migration
Corridors Fund (continued)

Federal Compliance
Presented by SWCA

Western Big Game Seasonal Habitat and Migration Corridors Fund

FEDERAL REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

SWCA ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS



Christian Testerman



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